

# Rod Paige, nation’s first African American to serve as secretary of education, dies at 92

By Safiyah Riddle  
Associated Press

Rod Paige, an educator, coach and administrator who rolled out the nation’s landmark No Child Left Behind law as the first African American to serve as U.S. education secretary, died Tuesday, December 9, 2025.

Former President George W. Bush, who tapped Paige for the nation’s top federal education post, announced the death in a statement but did not provide further details. Paige was ninety-two.

Under Paige’s leadership, the Department of Education implemented No Child Left Behind policy that in 2002 became Bush’s signature education law and was modeled on Paige’s previous work as a school superintendent in Houston. The law established universal testing standards and sanctioned schools that failed to meet certain benchmarks.

“Rod was a leader and a friend,” Bush said in his statement. “Unsatisfied with the status quo, he challenged what we called ‘the soft bigotry of low expectations.’ Rod worked hard to make sure that where a child was born didn’t determine whether they could succeed in school and beyond.”

Roderick R. Paige was born in the small Mississippi town of Monticello of roughly 1,400 inhabitants. The oldest of five



Paige

## IN MEMORIAM

siblings, Paige served a two-year stint in the U.S. Navy before becoming a football coach at the high school, and then junior college levels. Within years, Paige rose to head coach of Jackson State University, his alma mater, and a historically black college in the Mississippi capital city.

There, his team became the first — with a 1967 football

game — to integrate Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium, once an all-white venue.

After moving to Houston in the mid-1970s to become head coach of Texas Southern University, Paige pivoted from the playing field to the classroom and education — first as a teacher, and then as administrator and eventually the dean of its college of education from 1984 to 1994.

Amid growing public recogni-

tion of his pursuit of educational excellence, Paige rose to become superintendent of the Houston Independent School District, then one of the largest school districts in the country.

He quickly drew the attention of Texas’ most powerful politicians for his sweeping educational reforms in the diverse Texas city. Most notably, he

Paige

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# Viola Ford Fletcher – International Figure and oldest known living survivor of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre - issued strong appeal with memoir before dying

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

God’s wheel of time has closed the eyes of the oldest 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre survivor, Viola Ford Fletcher. She was born on May 10, 1914 and died on November 24, 2025 at age 111. Her lived experiences not only linger, but speak to contemporary inequalities that are offspring of racial violence and economic theft.

Greater than a century ago, young Viola - the second oldest of eight children - and her family left behind sharecropping fields in Comanche, Oklahoma for a better life in Greenwood, Oklahoma – an all-Black district that flourished as the most prosperous Black community in the U.S. This national symbol of economic worthiness was composed of 35 blocks of thriving hotels, theaters, groceries, law firms, doctors’ offices, restaurants, and churches. Viola saw this thriving district as a safety net, filled with friendly neighbors and beautiful homes.



Viola Ford Fletcher died at age 111 on November 24, 2025

Then tragedy struck this prominent “Black Wall Street” for more than 18 hours from May 31 to June 1, 1921. A white

mob attack created trauma that festered throughout Fletcher’s entire life. The U.S. Department of Justice reported this

year that this “military-style attack” was orchestrated by white civilians, many of whom were armed local officials. According to Kolumn Magazine, “looting, burning, and killing included planes flying overhead and dropping explosives or incendiaries on Black homes and businesses.”

During her later years, Viola (widely known as “Mother Fletcher,” spoke publicly about the Tulsa Race Massacre. When she was 107-years-old, she testified before Congress in 2021. She recalled that she was only seven when the horrific incident occurred, and she referenced it as “a battlefield.” Her family’s home was filled with gunshots, the smell of smoke, and flaming windows.

The reign of terror spawned families running amidst gunshots and violence inflicted upon them. What once was prominent turned to ruin. Kolumn Magazine reported that

Fletcher

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# From Legality to Illegality: How the Trump Administration Is Reclassifying Lawful Immigrants as “Unauthorized”

## Redefining citizenship sends a clear message about who belongs and who doesn’t belong

By Christopher Young  
Contributing Writer

Since taking office, the Trump administration has targeted even lawful immigrants with recognized protections; and is pushing them into a category of “unauthorized.” This strategy accelerated after an Afghan refugee and CIA-trained former elite squad member was accused of shooting two National Guard members in Washington, D.C., an incident the administration used to blame refugees, restrict visas for 19 countries, and freeze Afghan immigration requests. At the same time, as the U.S. nears conflict with Venezuela, it is rescinding legal pathways and protections for Venezuelans and other communities.

The result is an unprecedented mass cancellation of legal status for people who followed every rule, creating a pipeline from lawful to “illegal” that could affect more than two million people and fundamentally reshape the meaning of legal immigration itself. Impacted groups include DACA recipients, TPS holders from multiple countries, and humanitarian parole that benefits Cubans, Venezuelans, Ukrainians, and many others.

Pilar Marrero, associate editor of American Community Media and co-producer of the National Briefing Series, moderated a briefing, joined by seventy-five media outlets from around the globe. She began with the question: “How is the administration redefining what it means to be in the country legally?” UCLA Professor Hiroshi Motomura, co-director of the UCLA Center for Immigration Law and Policy responded, “It involves taking status away from non-citizens who have lawful status today. So, they have it today and they won’t have it tomorrow or some point in the future, if the administration gets what it wants. I think the first thing to understand is that U.S. law has many different lawful immigration statuses - citizenship, lawful permanent residence, or what some people call a green card. But it also has many statuses that



Hiroshi Motomura.  
PHOTO: ZOCCALO PUBLIC SQUARE/  
JAKE FABRICIUS



Laura Flores-Perilla.  
PHOTO: INSTAGRAM



Adelys Ferro. PHOTO: VENEZUELAN-AMERICAN CAUCUS



Justice Jeremiah Johnson.  
PHOTO: LINKEDIN.

A DACA applicant for 20 years, “Andrea.”  
Not pictured for her own protection.

I think sometimes people call in-between, they’re not long-term lawful statuses,

Redefining

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# Thalia Mara Hall to host Vice President Kamala Harris on Jan. 14th

*The Mississippi Link Newswire*

“Jackson is honored to welcome Vice President Kamala Harris as part of her national book tour for “107 Days.” Her story of perseverance, and leadership continues to inspire people across the country,” said Mayor John Horhn. “We look forward to hosting her at Thalia Mara Hall and sharing in the dialogue her visit will spark about the future of our democracy.”

Jackson, MS, December 10, 2025 - Former Vice President Kamala Harris will continue her book tour for 107 DAYS into 2026, including a stop in Jackson, MS.

Following the demand and sold-out engagements of her 17-city international book tour, former Vice President Kamala Harris announced a set of 18 new appearances to bring her powerful and timely message to audiences across the country.

107 DAYS has become one of the defining political books of the year. The book debuted as an instant #1 New York Times Bestseller and has remained on the list for 10 consecutive weeks, with over 600,000 copies sold across formats to date.

With surprising and revealing insights, Harris tells the story of one of the wildest and most consequential presidential campaigns in American history. During these special events, Vice President Kamala Harris will share her powerful and timely message about what it will take to move forward, especially for those feeling disheartened and disconnected from



**Harris**

the political process.

The book tour includes an event in Jackson, MS on January 14th at Thalia Mara Hall.

Meet & Greet tickets are available and include a photo with Harris and a signed copy of 107 DAYS.

# Statement from Mayor John Horhn on the passing of former U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Rod Paige

*The Mississippi Link Newswire*

Mayor John Horhn and the City of Jackson join the family, friends, and colleagues of Dr. Rod Paige in mourning the loss of a pioneering educator and public servant whose career began here in Mississippi and transformed lives across the nation.

Born in Monticello and educated at Jackson State University, Dr. Paige dedicated his life to opening doors of opportunity for generations of students. His historic appointment as the first African American U.S. Secretary of Education marked a defining moment in the pursuit of equity and excellence in American education.

Dr. Paige’s leadership, integrity, and belief in the power of learning left an lasting mark on every institution he touched, from the Houston Independent School District to the Department of Educa-



**Paige**

tion, to his return home as interim president of Jackson State University.

The City of Jackson extends heartfelt condolences to his devoted wife, Stephanie, and to the Paige family. We are grateful for Dr. Paige’s legacy and for the example he set as a son of Mississippi.

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## Paige

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moved to implement stricter metrics for student outcomes, something that became a central point for Bush’s 2000s bid for president. Bush — who later would dub himself the “Education President” — frequently praised Paige on the campaign trail for the Houston reforms he called the “Texas Miracle.

And once Bush won the election, he tapped Paige to be the nation’s top education official.

As education secretary from 2001 to 2005, Paige emphasized his belief that high expectations were essential for childhood development.

“The easiest thing to do is assign them a nice little menial task and pat them on the head,” he told the Washington Post at the time. “And that is precisely what we don’t need. We need to assign high expectations to those people, too. In fact, that may be our greatest gift: expecting them to achieve and then sup- porting them in their efforts to achieve.”

While some educators applauded the law for standardizing expectations regardless of student race or income, others complained for years about what they consider a maze of redundant and unnecessary tests and too much “teaching to the test” by educators.

In 2015, House and Senate lawmakers agreed to pull back many provisions from “No Child Left Behind,” shrinking the Education Department’s role in setting testing standards and preventing the federal agency from sanctioning schools that fail to improve. That year, then-President Barack Obama signed the sweeping education law overhaul, ushering in a new approach to account- ability, teacher evaluations, and the way the most poorly performing schools are pushed to improve.

After serving as education secretary, Paige returned to Jackson State Uni- versity a half century after he was a student there, serving as the interim president in 2016 at the age of eighty-three.

Into his nineties, Paige still publicly expressed deep concern, and opti- mism, about the future of U.S. education. In an opinion piece appearing in the Houston Chronicle in 2024, Paige lifted up the city that helped propel him to national prominence, urging readers to “look to Houston not just for inspi- ration, but for hard-won lessons about what works, what doesn’t and what it takes to shake up a stagnant system.”

## Fletcher

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at least “300 Black residents were dead; more than 1,000 homes and businesses were destroyed; and 10,000 people were suddenly homeless.” “The scenes still played ‘like a movie in my mind,’” as she tried to sleep, Fletcher claimed.

For years, families struggled to rebuild their shattered lives and to regroup. Fletcher, a dislocated child, was displaced and impover- ished. Then after the fourth grade, she left school. She married Robert Fletcher at age 18. The couple worked in shipyards sup- portive of World War II, and she was an assistant welder, labeled “a man’s job,” in an age of segregation and discrimination.

“No one cared about us for almost 100 years,” the informant told Congress, while appealing for support of reparations for Blacks

harmed by the Tulsa Race Massacre. Lawmakers expressed both empathy and sympathy via a standing ovation, but recognition without restitution was the result of courtroom setbacks for Fletcher and other plaintiffs. These setbacks, however, did not deter Fletcher from telling the 1921 Tulsa, Oklahoma story.

In 2023, the author was 109 when she published her memoir, “Don’t Let Them Bury My Story: The Oldest Living Survivor of the Tulsa Race Massacre in Her Own Words.” This book, re- leased by Mocha Media Publishing, is co-authored with Ike How- ard, Fletcher’s grandson. Nestled within the scope of American society, the chronicle reveals Black migration; prosperity depict- ing life in its finest with love of family, children at play, Sun-

## Redefining

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but they come with work permits, and these statuses are lawful.”

Laura Flores-Perilla, a Staff Attorney at Justice Ac- tion Center, responded to a question about humanitar- ian parole. “This is a tool that administrations from both sides of the aisle have used for the last seven decades. It provides a safe pathway for entry to the United States, but also the ability to work in the US, in response to grave humanitarian crises that are happening in other countries. On the second day of Trump’s second term he announced he was terminating humanitarian parole. Deportation and/or expedited removal is the stated goal and has already begun.” She added that her agency has had some success in at least temporarily blocking some of these actions.

The next panelist, Adelys Ferro, Director of Partner- ships at Latino Victory and the Executive Director of the Venezuelan-American Caucus, responded to a question about the years-long shifts in administration policies on Venezuelans. Prior to her remarks she reported that the Supreme Court of the United States will hear the chal- lenges to the birthright citizenship question next year. “What I hear daily in the Venezuelan community is ter- ror, fear, exhaustion, and betrayal. Venezuelan families have spent years doing everything asked of them. They register for TPS. They apply for work permits. They show up in court. They pay their taxes. They build small businesses. Their kids are in our schools, churches, and universities. Right now, 600,000 are at risk of deporta- tion. One day we Venezuelans were welcome here, now we are disposable.”

The Honorable Jeremiah Johnson, former immigration judge in San Francisco and VP of the National Associa-

tion of Immigration Judges, was recently let go as part of the Trump Administration’s purging of certain immigra- tion judges. He was asked how his removal fits in with the administration’s broader efforts. “In the context of legality to illegality, people used to come to court, but now they are scared to come to court. If they fail to ap- pear in court, it results in an order of removal. So, if people lose their pending status, it ends their process as asylum seekers, and by removing judges you remove the whole framework. You are a lawful resident unless I, as a judge say so, and so the process of review would be removed completely.”

A woman, only identified as Andrea, for her protec- tion, spoke next. She is a Dreamer and DACA activist/ immigrant rights organizer. She came to the United States at age five and applied for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. She is now 25 and her application is still on hold. She shared that she lives in the DC-Mary- land-Virginia area and is working on a master’s degree in public policy. She spoke about the lack of stability. “This isn’t new. We’ve lived in fear for my whole life. People take things for granted, like renewing their license, and now with Real ID, I can’t do that. The Administration is telling us to self-deport. This is my home. My friends and family are here.” She was asked by the moderator if she had anything to share with journalists, and she said, “Please don’t forget that we are people. Please try to re- member the humanity. There are lives at stake. Please try to remember how exhausting this can be for us.”

The entire, one-hour briefing can be viewed at [https:// americancommunitymedia.org/media-briefings/ from- legality-to-illegality-how-the-trump-administration-is- reclassifying-lawful-immigrants-as-unauthorized](https://americancommunitymedia.org/media-briefings/from- legality-to-illegality-how-the-trump-administration-is- reclassifying-lawful-immigrants-as-unauthorized)



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## City of Jackson tree lighting ceremony and annual holiday parade

Mississippi Link Newswire

The annual Christmas Tree lighting ceremony for the City of Jackson was held Friday, December 4, 2025 beginning at 4:00 p.m. in the garden outside City Hall.

The holiday parade was held December 6, starting at 6:00 p.m. along Capitol Street, highlighting floats, marching bands, and holiday cheer as it went through downtown Jackson.

Dr. Robert Smith, a native of Jackson and trailblazing health-

care advocate, brought a legacy of service to this year's parade as grand marshal. A graduate of Tougaloo College and Howard University School of Medicine, Dr. Smith returned to Mississippi in 1962 to serve as the first volunteer Southern medical field director for the Medical Committee for Human Rights, supporting the Civil Rights Movement's healthcare efforts. He played a pivotal role in establishing Federally Qualified Health Centers nationwide, in-

cluding leading Central Mississippi Health Services since 1963 as the state's first multispecialty clinic providing care regardless of ability to pay, and has influenced healthcare access for millions through his academic and clinical contributions at institutions like the University of Mississippi School of Medicine.

City of Jackson, Mayor John Horhn stated, "We are honored to have Dr. Smith, a true Jackson icon whose lifelong dedication to equality and community



Dr. Robert Smith, Christmas Parade grand marshal speaks with a reporter

health embodies the spirit of the holidays, lead our parade as grand marshal. "His work reminds us that service to others is the greatest gift we can give this season."

PHOTOS BY JAY JOHNSON







# Dozens Locked in Hinds County Jail without an indictment some for over a year

By Daja E. Henry  
Additional reporting  
contributed by Caleb Bedillion

*This article was published in partnership with The Marshall Project - Jackson, a nonprofit news team covering Mississippi's criminal justice systems..*

At least 60 people arrested in Hinds County have been jailed in its detention facilities for over three months — including at least five for more than a year — with no indictment filed against them and no pathway to a trial in sight.

One man has been in jail for 18 months on drug charges without an indictment and has no attorney to move his case along, according to court records reviewed by The Marshall Project - Jackson.

Mississippi is one of the few states where people can be jailed indefinitely without indictment, a critical step to send a case to a judge or a jury. This gap has deepened the overcrowding, violence and dysfunction that put Raymond Detention Center — the county's primary jail — under federal control in the first place.

The lengthy detentions in Hinds County have been caused by multiple issues, including an increased Capitol Police force in Jackson, an overwhelmed state crime lab, and a shortage of prosecutors and public defenders to handle the backlog of cases.

The federal receiver operating the Raymond Detention Center has warned the county district attorney that the jail cannot be fixed while people remain locked up without a way to get to court.

In a letter obtained by The Marshall Project - Jackson, federal receiver Wendell M. France wrote to Hinds County District Attorney Jody Owens telling him that holding so many people is costly for county taxpayers and is impeding France's ability to fix the jail's problems. France, who took over the jail on Oct. 1, asked



A decaying detention facility road sign with lichen, shadows of people in a line  
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JOVELLE TAMAYO/THE MARSHALL PROJECT.

Owens to address the delays in prosecution immediately.

“Overcrowding affects housing, safety, and services,” France wrote. “Staff and funding that should be directed toward facility improvements are instead consumed managing extended pretrial stays.”

As part of the court's receivership agreement, France is barred from making public statements about his work.

More than half of the undicted detainees were arrested on violent crime charges, including rape, murder and aggravated assault. Others were charged with nonviolent offenses, including burglary and drug possession.

One detainee, LaDarius Moore, was arrested more than six months ago and is being held on a \$7.5 million bond, one of the highest in the county's history. As of Dec. 1, he has not been indicted.

In a handwritten note to Judge Debra Gibbs, Moore asked for his day in court. “I have lost my job after being in here for 6 months. My kids mother can't afford to feed them without SNAP benefits

on her own and they really need me to take care of them. I respectfully ask you to consider my family responsibilities.”

Moore faces charges of aggravated assault, being a felon in possession of a firearm, and 12 counts of armed robbery. His court file shows no response from the judge and no upcoming court date.

#### SECTION BREAK

Hinds County's indictment delays reflect a statewide problem, said André de Gruy, the state public defender. The Marshall Project - Jackson previously reported on a case in Pike County, in which a man was incarcerated for nearly 18 months before being indicted.

A federal judge appointed France in 2022 after the county repeatedly failed to comply with a Justice Department agreement to address rampant violence, understaffing, a steady flow of drugs into the facility, and poor record-keeping that kept detainees there long past their court-ordered release dates. Appeals delayed France's start until this October.

More than a decade af-

ter the Justice Department first brought its case, reports of inhumane conditions still abound. Detainees at Raymond reported living in darkness, being extorted to use the restrooms and sleeping on filthy floors. Earlier this year, a man was killed inside the jail and two others died of drug overdoses. In October, the Hinds County Board of Supervisors approved an emergency declaration because of overcrowding at the facility, which held about 450 people at the beginning of that month.

“You're risking life and limb in the Hinds County jail. That is a serious proposition of someone who hasn't been indicted of any crime, much less convicted,” said Hernandez D. Stroud, a senior fellow in the Justice Program at the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University, who has studied jail receivership. “That's scary.”

Typically, after a person is arrested, law enforcement turns the case over to the district attorney, who brings the case before a grand jury. If the grand jury returns an indictment — a formal criminal

charge — the case moves to a judge and potentially a jury.

Already burdened with a backlog of cases, the county's legal system has been inundated with arrests since the Capitol Police began expanding in July 2021, in response to what Gov. Tate Reeves called a “never-ending cycle of violent crime.” The Capitol Police force previously guarded state property, but its jurisdiction, the Capitol Complex Improvement District, has since grown to more than 20 square miles in the city. The force has also grown from 81 officers in 2021 to more than 150. By the end of 2023, the number of indictments had risen 33% from the previous year.

A receiver is “not going to be able to address those problems until you reduce the population to be more in line with the staffing levels you have, and the bed capacity,” de Gruy said. “Trying to do that in an environment where you're now seeing a lot more people being arrested, it just makes his job that much harder.”

Lengthy waits for case files from arresting agencies and reports from an overwhelmed crime lab also drag cases out, said de Gruy.

In response to France's letter, Owens wrote that he had not received case files from law enforcement on more than 100 of the approximately 240 undicted detainees, including those held for more than three months. He also cited delays in receiving final autopsy reports, a need for mental health evaluations of defendants and “the sheer volume of crime plaguing our community.”

Owens' office indicted 1,264 cases last year and resolved 1,135, leaving 129 open. The previous year, grand juries returned indictments in 1,696 cases and his office resolved just 989. Cases are resolved by guilty pleas, trials, dismissals or pretrial diversion programs.

Owens also told France that

the jail roster contained misspelled names and outdated information. In some cases, people listed as undicted had already been indicted or released.

“This just has layers of institutional incompetence and dysfunction, such that even when you have a receiver, it is hard to disentangle everything to get to the constitutional violations,” Stroud said. “It's stunning.”

Hinds County Sheriff Tyree Jones, who used to run the jail and also serves as the Jackson Police chief, said he was not aware of any delays in forwarding cases to prosecutors.

“When it comes to the jail, I think everybody has their own individual opinion, and everybody has their own professional responsibility,” Jones said. “There's probably a little bit more room for correction on all levels.”

Owens and Hinds County Public Defender Gail Wright Lowery have asked the county Board of Supervisors for \$700,000 in emergency funds, split between their offices, to fund six to eight staff members to focus on reducing the jail population.

“The only way the system works is that ... as many people are getting out of our system as fast as we're bringing them in,” Owens said at the Nov. 3 board meeting. “Our current volume doesn't allow us to do that.”

Wright Lowery said five attorneys have recently left her office. She requested the funds to boost her staff's salaries and to hire experienced attorneys to work part-time to help move cases through the system.

“Every time I lose an attorney, you have an average of over 100 people in detention who lose their attorney,” she said. Her office is funded for 14 lawyers.

Hinds County Board of Supervisors President Robert Graham said the board would consider the request for the \$700,000.

# Congress: Do not give Americans a lump of lost healthcare coal

By Senator Hillman Fraizer  
MS District 27



In the midst of what should be a joyous holiday season, millions of Americans are instead anxious and worried. So many of us are stressed about rising food and housing costs squeezing household budgets, alongside uncertainty about the impacts of tariffs, increasing unemployment, and persistent inflation. And now Congress is about to hand hardworking Americans another lump of coal — in the form of lost healthcare or skyrocketing premiums.

Instead of focusing on affordability and increasing access, President Trump and leaders

#### COMMENTARY

in Congress are making things worse: by raising healthcare costs and cutting coverage. They have already passed a law that makes it harder for working people to get affordable healthcare — and if Congress does not act quickly to extend Affordable Care Act (ACA) tax credits, even more of our neighbors could see their healthcare premiums skyrocket. With over 90% of ACA enrollees receiving tax credits, this just will not work.

You might not be thinking of the ripple effect of these cuts. Take many farmers, for example, who are small business owners accessing healthcare through the ACA. We know many farmers are struggling right now, whether

from cuts to successful local food purchasing programs or market volatility from tariffs. Any increase in health care could force the worst of all choices: continue farming or try to find a job that provides health care. With so much strain on our farmers and food system, can we really afford to put farmers out of business?

It does not stop there. Skilled workers in the building trades, entrepreneurs, real estate professionals, and so many more use the ACA for healthcare. Loss of access to affordable healthcare will impact not only these workers, but our construction industry, housing, and food supply, to name a few. Students access care through the ACA while they work to achieve their educational goals. Rural residents use the

ACA more than non-rural residents, and rural communities are already struggling with hospitals and clinics closing.

If you are thinking since you get your healthcare through your job, you will not be affected, there's bad news there too. Employers will be facing the biggest premium hikes in fifteen years, following a decade of steady increases. Of course, those increases will be passed along to employees in the form of lost coverage or higher employee contributions. When these costs become unaffordable, that could lead to layoffs or job losses.

To make matters worse, the new law — the so-called “One Big Beautiful Bill” — also slashed essential funding for Medicaid and Medicare, potentially impacting

access to healthcare for many more millions of Americans, and cuts funding for rural hospitals, nursing homes and clinics, which will force hundreds of life-saving facilities to close. In many cases, these are areas with no alternative access to care.

Why would Congress cut healthcare for millions of Americans? Why would they make decisions that close rural hospitals and make it impossible to stay in your home community and raise a family? The cuts are to pay for huge — obscene — tax breaks for the wealthiest and big corporations — like insurers and drug corporations. This is not right. Hardworking Americans need the system to work for them too, and it should not require a lobbyist or big campaign contributions

for Congress to do the right thing.

We do not have time to waste. We cannot afford any more delays. President Trump and Republican leaders in Congress have offered no alternative and have no other plan. Those healthcare tax credits expire at the end of the month and right now millions of Americans are deciding whether to sign up or renew Affordable Care Act coverage during the open enrollment window.

This holiday season, we hope Congress will honor the hard work of Americans, extend the ACA tax credits, fix essential funding for Medicaid and Medicare, keep rural hospitals open, and continue working to make health care accessible and affordable for all Americans in the coming year.



# She Refused – Remembering a changemaker 70 years on

*Teaching individual resistance today, with remarks by trailblazer Flonzie Brown Wright*



Mrs. Rosa Parks. PHOTO: BETTMAN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES.

By Christopher Young  
Contributing Writer

In our capitalist society, saturated in systemic racism and an ever-increasing gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots,’ many people have given up or are reluctant to make their voices heard, despite this country’s long and painful history to make every voice – every vote – count. How many times have we heard people say – “it doesn’t matter anyway,” or “what difference would it make.” Mrs. Rosa Parks was not one of those people.

Last week marked the 70th Anniversary of her most famous arrest. “On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested in Montgomery, Alabama, for disorderly conduct for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man. Civil Rights leader E. D. Nixon bailed her out of jail, joined by white friends Clifford Durr, an attorney, and his wife, Virginia. Rosa did not win her case, which went to

trial in the Recorder’s Court of the city of Montgomery on December 5. She was fined \$14.00, including court costs. Her attorney Fred Gray appealed but lost on a technicality. Years later, Reverend Jesse Jackson asked her why she refused to move to the back of bus. She replied, “I thought of Emmett Till and I couldn’t go back.” per The Library of Congress.

The determination of Mrs. Parks, her individual resistance to segregation, became the catalyst for the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which lasted 381 days, and led to the Supreme Court ruling segregation on public buses was unconstitutional. Brown v. Board happened just one year prior, and the Civil Rights Act came nine years later. She was there through it all. Her pursuit of equal justice can never be forgotten. She passed in 2005, the same year Congress unveiled her statue in the U.S. Capitol, which had been commissioned by Congress –

the first full length statue of an African American in the Capitol.

A Pew Research Organization report on voting, dated June 26, 2025, revealed data that Mrs. Parks surely would not want to believe. The percentage of those who stayed home for the past three presidential elections in a row was 20% for white and 37% for African Americans.

Someone who personally knew Mrs. Parks and was a trailblazer herself is Dr. Flonzie Brown Goodloe Wright. “On Nov. 5, 1968, Wright became the first Black woman elected to public office in Mississippi, post-Reconstruction, as the Canton Election Commissioner,” per <https://voicesofthecivilrightsmovement.com>.

Dr. Wright’s schedule is relentless, but we are grateful that she always makes time for The Mississippi Link newspaper. At 83, she said, “Chris I am too old to be this busy,” after just getting off the telephone with



Flonzie Brown Wright in 2021, <https://voicesofthecivilrightsmovement.com>. PHOTO: JOSHUA LOTT/THE WASHINGTON POST VIA GETTY IMAGES.

the legendary Rev Dr. Amos Brown, Pastor of Third Baptist Church of San Francisco - arranging for him to come to Mississippi for an upcoming Black History Month event.

In sharing about voter apathy – an apparent dismissal of the decades of voting rights effort that she and Mrs. Parks put in – she didn’t hold back. “Our people should not ever sit down on our right to vote behind how it was gained. Stories need to be passed on in a way so that young people can understand and remember what we went through. Many young people don’t feel as if their vote actually counts. We have seen so much voter suppression, racism reappearing its ugly head. Some young people don’t understand the foundation - understanding what it was like to be a slave, to be beaten, to be sold, to be hung, to be property. We refuse to go back! Today you have no excuse for not knowing what we came through, but we must



Full-length statue of Mrs. Rosa Parks. PHOTO: ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL – WWW.AOC.GOV

tell the stories strongly. We do our people an injustice and a disservice when we don’t honor their struggles. If I had been born just four generations ago, I would have been a slave.”

She spoke about the phrase – ‘every generation gets weaker and wiser’ – weaker morally, and wiser technologically, and mentioned Bible verses. She highlighted that Mrs. Park’s action went far beyond being treated as equals on a public bus, “she empowered women, she allowed the women’s movement to advance and transcend other issues around the country.” She shared the story of then 15-year-old Claudette Colvin who was arrested nine months before Mrs. Parks for the same individual resistance. She encouraged our readers to learn the story of activist C. Delores Tucker, who brought a delegation from Philadelphia, PA to march at Selma in 1965, and who along with New York Congresswoman Shirley Chisom,

founded the National Political Congress of Black Women.

Driving the point deeper, Dr. Wright shared, “I’m not sitting here the first black elected official in the state of Mississippi because people thought it was a nice idea. I’m here because people supported me, we got the right to vote, we went to jail for it, we got tear-gassed for it, we were shot at – I was shot at. But we were willing to pay that price. Young people, a lot of time, live in our microwave society, because patience has not been one of their strong virtues - that has to be taught.”

Help us to remember, even 70 years on, the painful sacrifices made by women like Mrs. Rosa Parks and our very own, Dr. Flonzie Brown Goodloe Wright out of tiny Farmhaven, Mississippi, to ensure the right to vote – the right to exercise our voice and to have our voice heard. It is desperately important - that’s why so many try so hard to take it away from us.

## Teens reject today’s news as Trump intensifies his assault on the press

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Contributor

The American press is facing a crisis deeper than shrinking newsrooms or digital disruption. A new study from the News Literacy Project finds that teenagers overwhelmingly believe the nation’s news media is fake, chaotic, and dishonest, a view that threatens the foundation of an informed society at the same time a sitting president intensifies his attacks on journalism. The findings land in an era where corporate consolidation, political pressure, and presidential intimidation collide with the public’s fading confidence in the institutions meant to hold power accountable.

According to the report, 84% of teens use negative words to describe news media. They use words such as “fake,” “false,” “lies,” “chaotic,” “overwhelming,” “distorted” and “boring.” Many teens believe that journalists lie more than they inform. One in three teens said journalists are doing well at “lying or deceiving.” Half believe reporters “make up quotes.” Six in ten believe reporters “take images out of context.” Very few believe journalists confirm facts before reporting them. Only 30% said journalists regularly verify information. Only 23% said reporters correct errors. Even



when asked to name one thing journalists are doing well, 10% of teens said “nothing.”

The study shows how fragile the understanding of real journalism has become. Just 9% of teens used positive words such as “informative” or “good” when asked to describe the media. Their limited exposure to journalism in entertainment is dominated by superhero movies. The most common reference teens made to journalism on screen was Spider-Man.

Authors of the report warn that this weak grasp of journalism principles leaves young people open to manipulation and political propaganda. They are susceptible to conspiracy theories, falsehoods, and partisan content disguised as news.

The findings reflect a national trend. Only 28% of adults say they have confidence in mass media to report news fully, accurately, and fairly. A Reuters Digital News Report found that only 30% of Americans trust most news most of the time.

At the same time distrust grows, the Trump administration has escalated unprecedented attacks on the press. The president routinely insults reporters, pressures media executives, and encourages regulators to punish newsrooms. On Air Force One, when pressed about the Epstein files, he told a Bloomberg reporter “quiet piggy.” During a joint appearance with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, his response to a question about

Jamal Khashoggi’s murder was “You are a terrible person.” He has mocked disabled reporters, told an Asian American journalist she should “ask China” about COVID, and accused Black reporters of being racist.

These confrontations have coincided with federal pressure on media companies. After Trump’s Federal Communications Commission chairman publicly targeted Jimmy Kimmel, ABC briefly suspended the late-night host. The FCC has launched investigations into nearly every major broadcast network. Trump has sued newspapers, broadcasters, and social media companies, sometimes winning multimillion-dollar settlements despite filing meritless claims. The White

House now maintains a website cataloging journalists it labels “biased,” listing their names and work under headings such as “malpractice” and “left-wing lunacy.” A leaderboard ranks the Washington Post at the top of what the administration calls offenders. The site claims the press “subversively implied” wrongdoing and calls several outlets “media offenders of the week.”

Conflict has also erupted within the conservative media ecosystem. Trump earlier echoed Newsmax’s position in a regulatory fight over TV station ownership, writing “NO EXPANSION OF THE FAKE NEWS NETWORKS” and “If anything, make them SMALLER!” after executives warned him that lifting ownership caps could harm conservative voices.

For teenagers watching this environment, the news appears hostile, fractured, and untrustworthy. Yet while many traditional outlets struggle to maintain credibility under political pressure, the Black Press of America continues to operate with a clear mission that has never shifted from its roots in 1827 when Freedom’s Journal became the first Black owned newspaper in the United States.

That legacy was front and center at this year’s Black Press Day held in Washington D.C.,

the nation’s capital. The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) represents more than 200 Black owned publications and is chaired by San Diego Voice & Viewpoint Publisher, Dr. John Warren. This year marks 198 years of African American publishers documenting and defending Black life in their publications.

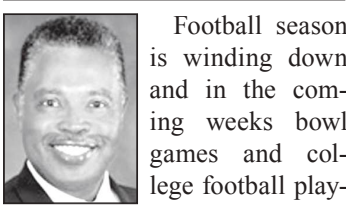
NNPA President & CEO, Dr Benjamin Chavis Jr. stated “The Black Press of America continues to plow up the ground with our publications and our applications. It is our job. It is our calling. It is our legacy. It is our responsibility to fight and advocate for freedom, justice, and equality. We are the trusted voice of Black America, and we will not give up that trust for anything.

At the event, Westside (Fla.) Gazette Publisher Bobby Henry Sr. helped to honor the founders and journalists who built the institution that remains indispensable today. “The publishers we honor today were more than just storytellers. They were guardians of history, fearless in their pursuit of truth, unwavering in their service to our people,” Henry remarked. “Their newspapers were battlefields of justice, their words weapons against oppression. Their legacy is forever enshrined in the fabric of our history.”



# The Landscape For College Athletes And Coaches Is High On Money And Low On Allegiance

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



Football season is winding down and in the coming weeks bowl games and college football playoffs will begin. In some respects, football is a year-round sport. The playing stops but the recruiting of prospective college student-athletes never does.

Let's be reminded that college signing day will be Wednesday, February 4, 2026. Now, there is the early signing period which happens this month where high school recruits can sign a National Letter of Intent.

Student-athletes, along with their parents and family, will sit

at tables with pen in hand. The custom is to have three or four caps of the schools recruiting them and they will choose the winning school's cap. What role do NIL agreements play?

Another factor that is in play is the transfer portal. Thousands of college student-athletes have benefitted from it over the years. They are looking for more playing time and usually more money. Back in the day, student-athletes at the Division I level had to sit out a year before joining their new team.

According to ESPN, over 3,400 FBS scholarship players in 2024-2025 entered the transfer portal. This number was much lower prior to Name, Image and Likeness agreements. It says the days of the pure athletic scholarship are over. I received

an athletic scholarship to attend college and was thankful to get it.

I have raised a debatable question before and that was how teammates feel about each other's NIL agreement. Does it cause hard feelings? Is all of that forgotten once the games begin?

I believe that winning is still the most important part of the sports equation. That purist notion still reigns supreme in college athletics. It is the foundation and the bedrock. To quote former player and coach Herm Edwards, "you play to win the game".

Another pressing issue with college football is with coaches. I am old school many times over. Way back when, you didn't see coaches moving around from school to school. It has changed

somewhat today.

Of late, it's like a pigskin carousel. It's going around with the conductor asking where do you want to get off. This seems to be happening mostly at the Division I level.

College football has had some legendary coaches who left their imprint on the sport. Their names were tied to the schools they represented.

We will never forget Eddie Robinson (Grambling State University), Frank Beamer (Virginia Tech University), Jake Gaither (Florida A&M University), Bobby Bowden (Florida State University) and Bill Hayes (Winston-Salem State University).

These coaches were difference-makers in the lives of their players. They molded boys into

men. Simply put, they were winners on and off the field. These are just a few of the coaches that we respected and revered. All of us have our lists of impactful coaches.

Now, we are seeing right in front of our athletic eyes coaches with winning records that are being fired or simply walking away from their positions. Take for example, James Franklin who was fired as the coach at Penn State despite having a winning record. The problem was his teams couldn't beat Ohio State or Michigan.

Another example is Lane Kiffin who had a winning record at Mississippi State and simply decided to pursue another coaching opportunity.

Allegiance wasn't a factor at Penn State by the athletic de-

partment. Beating rivals was. Coach Kiffin left because of new challenges and allegiance wasn't considered. Those are my opinions.

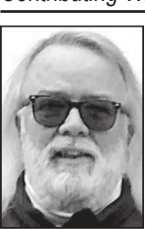
My wife who is a latecomer to sports believes that schools shouldn't be allowed to recruit coaches during the season. They should be expected to continue coaching until the end of the season including bowl games and playoffs.

She also thinks that it is not fair for student-athletes to be left without their head coach when eligible for postseason play. These same sentiments have been expressed by sports commentators and critics across the board.

Unless some changes are made, this trend will continue in college sports.

# Capitol Police Targets Jackson State Fans

By Christopher Young  
Contributing Writer



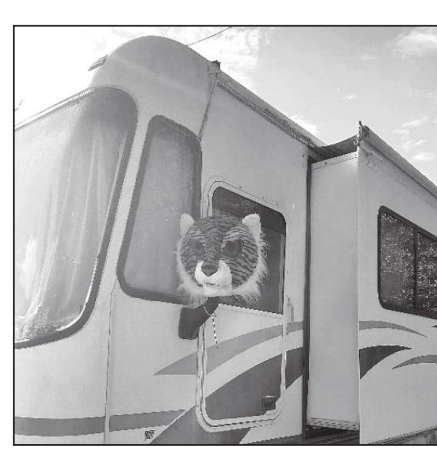
One would have to have never come near Veterans Memorial Stadium on game day to not know that vehicles are parked anywhere and everywhere to get in to see their 'Thee I Love' Jackson State University Tigers. It's hard to put into words what these games represent, what Jackson State means in our community and far beyond. This comprises the coaches, the players, the team staff, the stadium staff, the iconic marching band 'The Sonic Boom of the South,' the J5 Drum Majors, the Prancing J-Settes, even the little Baby Tigers. I'll confess that what happens to me at every single game, as I savor the flavor of what it all means, is I cry. Tears run down the face of this middle-aged man while sitting way up in the cheap seats. It was the same thing for me with the Norfolk State University Spartans – Behold the Green and Gold! – before I moved here from Norfolk, Virginia.

These games are far more than just games. These games are love, pride, history, legacy, family, and community -- a chance to set aside life's burdens and revel in a matchless spirit. These games are among the times when "The City with Soul" shines brightest. Who would dare claim to care about our city, and mess with that spirit? Capitol Police Chief Bo Luckey did. Per reporting from WLBT and other sources, he had tow-trucks lined up on Woodrow Wilson Boulevard to tow vehicles during the game. People had parked in the median or, in some manner, were partially blocking the road during the annual Soul Bowl – the rivalry game between the two largest Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Mississippi. Some reports indicate twenty different towing companies were involved. It was a planned attack on Jackson State and Alcorn State fans and families. Imagine leaving the game to find your vehicle gone. Some collateral reports detail the costs involved, including finding where your vehicle was towed to, taking time off work to retrieve it, not to mention the hundreds of dollars in fees.

Rankin County's Luckey has quite a resume when you check out his LinkedIn page – cutting his law enforcement teeth with Brandon Police Department and the Rankin County Sheriff's Office. He went on to do investigations for Homeland Security and the Mississippi Attorney General's Office before being appointed Capitol Police Chief in 2022. Luckey even holds a Juris Doctorate degree from Mississippi College School of Law. He certainly knows the law. But,



Percy & Mary Jackson ready for the SWAC Championship on December 6, 2025.



Tiger on duty - Guard the Yard – at the Tailgate.



The World Renown Sonic Boom of the South begins high-steppin onto the field at half-time December 6, 2025. PHOTOS: CHRISTOPHER YOUNG

does he know the people of Jackson? Does he care about them?

In an email to Bailey C. Martin, the media person for Mississippi Department of Public Safety, under whose jurisdiction Capitol Police falls, I asked how many community-based meetings Chief Luckey has attended or hosted in Jackson this year. This was her response, "Capitol Police has hosted four community-based meetings/events and has attended multiple events throughout the year." It leaves me wondering, what is the goal? What is the goal of community policing? Is the goal to hurt people while they are trying to enjoy something that they cherish so much? Being heavy-handed is a choice. Towing those cars at that time was planned. The VET's website says its football capacity is 60,492. We all know there is not adequate parking at the stadium. I've noticed Capitol Police escorting shuttle buses in and out of the stadium. Typically, there are two cruisers in front and two cruisers behind each bus. This reminds me of watching them when they are on patrol, or when they are in high pursuit – always three cruisers in a row. All Mississippi taxpayers pay that bill.

Game attendees Mr. and Mrs. Percy Jackson told me that they never miss a home game. When asked what they had to say about the stunt pulled by Capitol Police at The Soul Bowl, they shared, "that's hurting people. Some people don't have the money to pay for parking. The ticket prices are high enough. Nobody wins when you do that. It could hurt the game, too, because some people that happened to be there probably don't ever want to come back. I think the new

mayor should have stepped in on that. I know he has a lot on his plate, but that right there, he should have stepped in on that. It's not right to do those people like that. I've heard they charged some people \$450 - \$500 to get their car back."

Heavy-handedness is not a requirement of leadership. There are so many other decisions that could have been made, different approaches that could have been taken; approaches that could have made the point yet not attack the people you serve. Within the mission statement for the Jackson State Police Department, you can find these words – "Professionalism, in this sense, means adherence to impeccable integrity and careful protection of the rights of those we are sworn to serve." Compare that with these words contained in the Capitol Police mission statement – "Professionalism, in a sense, means adherence to impeccable integrity and careful protection of the rights of those authorized to enforce the law," per <https://www.dps.ms.gov/capitol-police>.

There's more to Jackson than some cars not parked correctly on game day. Example: I decided to have some popcorn at the stadium last Saturday. The sign at Pop-De-Licious Gourmet Popcorn said it was \$5. I approached the counter with my wallet opened and said, let me see if I can find five dollars in here. The lady responded, "just give me what you have baby, I got you." After paying the five dollars I walked away asking myself if a black man would experience that same embrace at Vaught Hemingway Stadium in Oxford. There's so much more to Jackson.

# If You Do Not Want Your Wife to Wear the Pants, Then Give Their Skirts Back

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



Get your popcorn ready for this one and sit back and relax – may need to add some extra butter! One of the biggest complaints I hear from married couples, especially from salty husbands, is that the wives want to run everything!

God made it clear in Genesis after the tragic incident of Eve; God instructed men to rule over their wives. After Eve (humor me for a second-this may be where we get the word naïve from– hey, preachers don't steal my content –let me give the message at your church) was easily convinced and deceived by the serpent to disobey God – God in a sense forced husbands to dominate their wives because Adam failed to be a man, the man God called him to be. Adam did nothing to stop the serpent or his wife - he took the fruit with ease and ate it TOO – umph, umph, umph! In other words, Eve wore the pants and Adam had on the skirt (extra butter please!)

The bible makes it clear in several passages that men are the head of the households and wives are expected to submit to their OWN husbands as unto the Lord, meaning, God expects wives to submit to Godly principles only. In other words, if your husband tries to entice you to steal – this doesn't align with God's commandments, therefore, God does not expect you to steal. Additionally, the bible emphasizes the following for wives: to be a helpmeet to her husband, be a Virtuous wife, do her husband no harm, be the crown to her husband's head, a wise woman builds her house and a foolish one tears it down, etc. On the other hand, God instructs husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church, husbands cherish (cherish mean to preserve, hold, nurture, foster – with tender care, SELFLESS LOVE – God's love was selfless), wash your wives with the Word not with vulgar and derogatory language, etc. and one of my favorites, God instructs husbands to acknowledge that their wives are the weaker vessels therefore, live with them in an understanding way, so that your prayers won't be hindered.

Husbands some of the factors that

contributes to wives wearing the pants or as you say running things is because you are not properly leading as God instructed. What does your prayer life look like? How often do you spend time with God to give you instructions on how to lead your family – you cannot properly lead your family with a part-time relationship with God? Is you patient enough to communicate with your wife (helpmeet) about things? Are you distracted by money, football, social media or Sister Cheeks – God gave you ONE household to be head of – YOU CANNOT BE THE HEAD OF TWO HOUSEHOLDS – your house and Sister Cheeks house???? (extra butter please)! Do you really have the passion and empathy to lead? Are you complacent? Is it easier to put the burden on your wife to lead? Do you provide for your family or is your wife doing that too? How many times does your wife CONSTANTLY ask you for advice (to lead) and you IGNORE HER, dismiss her with she talks too much, nags, do what you want, it doesn't matter to me, etc? And lawd have mercy, if she does it herself – take charge and fail at it – you complain about it, but it could have been prevented if you had properly led.

Husbands, you complain about your wives not respecting you, complain about your children being sour patch kids (how often do you teach and pray with and for your children?). You complain that your wife runs everything like the finances, household stuff, your businesses, your churches, and things are not the way God wants them to be and/or you prefer and desire them to be. HUSBANDS, many wives take charge because you allow them to and/or you refuse to - of course some wives do want full control. However, I am one wife who has no desire to RUN ANYTHING – I already have too much on my platter... I am very content being the help meet. Many wives, in other words wants you to LEAD AS GOD INSTRUCTS YOU TO – seeking God first as your Head, leading out of selflessness, love, understanding, washing with the Word, and cherishing her.

In conclusion, husbands, I promise it is very simple, if you don't want your wives to wear the pants then give their skirts back – clock it.





LEGAL

**ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI RE-ENACTING JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF ORDINANCES, ARTICLE II SECTIONS 86-51 THROUGH 86-62.**

WHEREAS, the public health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the City of Jackson shall be considered by this Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the re-enactment of the “City of Jackson Curfew Ordinance” is made necessary and has been overwhelmingly desired by the citizens of the City of Jackson because of a rise in the incidents of crimes, including, violence, robberies, and murders allegedly being committed by a growing number of youths in the City of Jackson; and

WHEREAS, the Jackson City Council proactively legislates this re-enactment of the Curfew Ordinance as a preemptive step to prevent the escalation of the acts of crime and violence allegedly being committed by a growing number of youths in the City of Jackson; and

WHEREAS, the “City of Jackson Curfew Ordinance” is hereby re-enacted as follows:

[ARTICLE II. CURFEW]

Sec. 86-51. Short title to article.

This article shall be known and may be cited as the “City of Jackson Curfew Ordinance.”

(Ord. No. 2007-25(7), § 1, 8-9-07; Ord. No. 2008-16(6), § 1, 5-20-08)

Sec. 86-52. Purpose and findings of article.

The City Council of the City of Jackson has determined that juveniles have been congregating in the city causing general disturbances to residents, and contributing to an excessive number of incidents of drug and alcohol related crimes, thefts, homicides and assaults, including a high percentage of crimes committed by and against juveniles; and

The City Council of the City of Jackson finds and determines that special and extenuating circumstances presently exist within this city that call for special regulation of minors within the city in order to protect them from each other and from other persons on the street during the nocturnal hours, to aid in crime prevention, to promote parental supervision and authority over minors, and to decrease juvenile crime rates; and

In accordance with the prevailing community standards, this article serves to regulate the conduct of juveniles on streets during evening hours, and those hours prohibited by the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law; to be effectively and consistently enforced for the protection of the juveniles in Jackson from each other and from other persons on the streets during nocturnal hours; to support parental control, authority, and responsibility for their children; to protect the public from nocturnal mischief by juveniles; to reduce the incidents of juvenile criminal activity; to further family responsibility; and to promote the public good, safety, and welfare.

After further review and continuing evaluation of this article, the City Council finds that there is continued justification for the purposes and findings herein to reinstate the curfew ordinance, as well as to extend the period of restrictions to coincide with the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law.

(Ord. No. 2007-25(7), § 1, 8-9-07; Ord. No. 2008-16(6), § 1, 5-20-08)

Sec. 86-53. Definitions.

For purpose of this article, the following terms, phrases, words and their derivations shall have the meanings given herein. When not inconsistent with the context, words used in the present tense include the future, words in the plural number include the singular, and words in the singular number include the plural. The word “shall” is always mandatory and not merely discretionary or suggestive.

City is the City of Jackson, Mississippi, with administrative offices at City Hall, 219 South President Street, Post Office Box 17, Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0017.

Compulsory school age child is a child who has attained or will attain the age of five years on or before September 1 of the calendar year and who has not reached his/her 18th birthday on or before September 1 of the calendar year.

Establishment means any privately-owned place of business operated for a profit to which the public is invited, including but not limited to any place of amusement or entertainment.

Minor or juvenile is any unemancipated person who has not reached his/her 18th birthday.

Parent is any person having legal custody of a minor:

- (1) As a natural or adoptive parent;
- (2) As a legal guardian; or
- (3) As a person to whom legal custody has been given by court order.

Police department shall refer to the police department headquarters located at 327 E. Pascagoula Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39201, or any officially designated precinct of the police department.

Remain means to linger, to tarry, and to stay unnecessarily upon the streets, including the congregating of groups (or of interacting minors) totalling four or more persons in which any minor involved would not be using the streets for ordinary or serious purposes such as mere passage or going home.

Street is a way or place, of whatever nature, open to the use of the public as a matter of right for purposes of vehicular travel or in the case a sidewalk thereof, for pedestrian travel. The term street includes the legal right-of-way, including, but not limited to, the traffic lanes, the curb, the sidewalks, whether paved or unpaved, and any grass, plots or other grounds found within the legal right-of-way of the street. The term “street” applies irrespective of what is called or formerly named, whether alley, avenue, court, road, dedicated or otherwise.

Time of night referred to herein is based upon the prevailing standard of time, whether central standard time or central daylight savings time, generally observed at that hour by the public in the city, prima facie the time when observed in the city administrative offices and police department.

(Ord. No. 2007-25(7), § 1, 8-9-07; Ord. No. 2008-16(6), § 1, 5-20-08)

Sec. 86-54. Restrictions.

(a) It shall be unlawful for any minor who has not reached his/her 18th birthday to remain in or upon any public street, highway, park, vacant lot, establishment or other public place within the city during the following periods:

10:00 p.m. Sunday to 6:00 a.m. Monday  
10:00 p.m. Monday to 6:00 a.m. Tuesday  
10:00 p.m. Tuesday to 6:00 a.m. Wednesday  
10:00 p.m. Wednesday to 6:00 a.m. Thursday  
10:00 p.m. Thursday to 6:00 a.m. Friday  
12:00 a.m. (midnight) to 6:00 a.m. Saturday  
12:00 a.m. (midnight) to 6:00 a.m. Sunday

(b) It shall be unlawful for any compulsory school age child to remain in or upon any public street, highway, park, vacant lot, establishment or other place within the city during the following periods:

(1) 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. on Monday through Friday during the school term in which such compulsory school age child is to be enrolled in a public, private, or legitimate nonpublic school, as required by the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law.

(2) Any minor who shall violate any of the provisions of the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law shall be dealt with according to the youth court laws of the State of Mississippi and in accordance with the directives of the youth court of Hinds County, Mississippi, or such other court as shall have jurisdiction over said minor.

(c) It shall further be unlawful for a parent of a minor to knowingly permit, or by inefficient control to allow, such minor to be or remain upon any street or establishment under circumstances not constituting an exception to, or otherwise beyond the scope of, this article as set forth in subsections (a) and (b) herein. The term “knowingly” includes knowledge that a parent should reasonably be expected to have concerning the whereabouts of a minor in that parent’s legal custody. It is intended to hold neglectful or careless parents to a reasonable community standard of parental responsibility through an objective test. It shall be no defense that a parent was completely indifferent to the activities or conduct or whereabouts of such minor child.

(d) The owner, operator, or any employee of an establishment commits an offense if he knowingly allow a minor to remain upon the premises of the establishment during curfew hours as set forth in subsections (a) and (b) herein, or fails to make a reasonable effort to report any such violation to the proper authorities including but not limited to, advising the child to leave and contact the Jackson Police Department.

(Ord. No. 2007-25(7), § 1, 8-9-07; Ord. No. 2008-16(6), § 1, 5-20-08)

Sec. 86-55. Exceptions.

The following shall constitute valid exceptions to the operation of the curfew:

- (1) At any time, a minor is accompanied by his or her parent;
- (2) When accompanied by an adult authorized by a parent of a minor to take said parent’s place in accompanying the minor for a designated period of time and definite purpose within a specified area;
- (3) Until the hour of 12:30 a.m. if the minor is on errand as directed by his or her parent;
- (4) If the minor is legally employed, for the period from 45 minutes before to 45 minutes after work, while going directly between his or her home and place of employment. This exception shall also apply if the minor is in a public place during curfew hours in the course of his or her employment. To come within this exception, the police officer shall dispatch communications to contact the minor’s employer for verification of employment;

- (5) Until the hour of 12:30 a.m. if the minor is on the property of or on the sidewalk directly adjacent to the place where such minor resides or the place immediately adjacent thereto if the owner of the adjacent building does not communicate an objection to the minor and the police officer;
- (6) When returning home by a direct route from (and within 30 minutes of the termination of) a school activity or an activity of a religious or other voluntary association, or special event as defined and regulated in the “City of Jackson Special Events Ordinance;”
- (7) In the case of reasonable necessity, but only after a minor’s parent has communicated to police department personnel the facts establishing such reasonable necessity relating to specified streets at a designated time for a defined purpose, including place of origin and destination. A copy of such communication, or the police record thereof duly certified by the chief of police to be correct, and appropriate notation of the time it was received and of the names and addresses of such parent and minor, shall constitute evidence of qualification under this exception;
- (8) When a minor is, with parental consent, in a motor vehicle engaged in bona fide interstate travel through the city, particularly on Interstate 55, 20 and 220 and all access roads to these interstate systems, including all interstate travel beginning or ending in the city.
- (9) The provisions of the daytime curfew set forth in Sec. 86- 54(b)(1), in effect from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., shall not apply on days when students are not required to attend school, including but not limited to weekends, scheduled school holidays, teacher in-service days, inclement weather closures, and official school breaks such as summer, fall, spring, or other holiday recesses, as determined by the calendar of the applicable school district. The evening curfew established in Sec. 86-54(a), however, shall remain in effect on all days, regardless of school session status, scheduled, or unscheduled breaks.
- (10) Each of the foregoing exceptions, and their several limitations, are severable.

(Ord. No. 2007-25(7), § 1, 8-9-07; Ord. No. 2008-16(6), § 1, 5-20-08)

Sec. 86-56. Violations.

(a) From 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. on Monday through Friday during the school term, a police officer of the city who has probable cause to believe that a minor is in violation of this article shall:

- (1) Stop and ascertain the name and address of the minor, and the school the minor attends;

- (2) Report to communications so that communications personnel can make every reasonable effort to contact the appropriate school representative to confirm the minor’s enrollment; and

- (3) The officer shall make every reasonable effort to transport the minor to the appropriate school; or if the minor has been suspended or if the minor’s school cannot be ascertained, then the officer, through communications personnel, shall make every reasonable effort to contact the minor’s parent. If the minor’s parent is unavailable, the officer shall transport the minor to the Henley-Young Juvenile Detention Center, where a Mississippi Department of Education representative will attempt to continue to contact the minor’s parents.

- (b) Between the hours of:

10:00 p.m. Sunday to 6:00 a.m. Monday;  
10:00 p.m. Monday to 6:00 a.m. Tuesday;  
10:00 p.m. Tuesday to 6:00 a.m. Wednesday;  
10:00 p.m. Wednesday to 6:00 a.m. Thursday;  
10:00 p.m. Thursday to 6:00 a.m. Friday;  
12:00 a.m. (midnight) to 6:00 a.m. Saturday; and  
12:00 a.m. (midnight) to 6:00 a.m. Sunday,

A police officer of the city who has probable cause to believe that a minor is in violation of this article shall:

- (1) Stop and ascertain the name and address of the minor;
- (2) Report to communications so that communications personnel can make every reasonable effort to contact the minor’s parent and transport the minor to his/her parent; or
- (3) If the minor’s parent is unavailable, the police officer shall transport the minor to the Henley-Young Juvenile Detention Center until the minor’s parent or proper authorities are contacted.

- (c) Notwithstanding paragraph (a) of this section, a police officer who has probable cause to believe that the minor is in violation of this article and has engaged in misdemeanor or felonious conduct, and if reasonable grounds exist to believe the minor has engaged in said delinquent conduct, the officer shall follow normal police procedure and transport the minor to the police department and place the minor in the Henley-Young Juvenile Detention Center.

- (d) Notwithstanding paragraph (b) of this section, when a minor is detained, the minor’s parent shall be immediately contacted. If, after this contact, there is still probable cause to believe that the minor was violating this article, the minor shall be held until the parent comes to retrieve minor. When the parent arrives, he or she shall be given a copy of this article. If no parent arrives within a reasonable time to retrieve the minor, then the minor shall be turned over to the custody of the local juvenile authorities until a parent can take custody of the minor.

(Ord. No. 2007-25(7), § 1, 8-9-07; Ord. No. 2008-16(6), § 1, 5-20-08)

Sec. 86-57. Penalties.

(a) Whenever a minor is transported to the Henley-Young Juvenile Detention Center for violation of this article under subsection (b), the minor’s parent shall be issued a written warning. For a second parental offense, a parent shall be fined \$25.00. For each subsequent offense by a parent, the fine shall be increased by an additional \$25.00, e.g. \$50.00 for third, \$75.00 for the fourth offense.

(b) The owner, operator, or any employee of an establishment violating any provision of this article shall, upon conviction thereof, be fined \$100.00 for a first offense. For each subsequent offense by an owner, operator, or employee of an establishment, the fine shall be increased by an additional \$50.00.

(Ord. No. 2007-25(7), § 1, 8-9-07; Ord. No. 2008-16(6), § 1, 5-20-08)

Sec. 86-58. Construction and severability.

Severability is intended throughout and within the provisions of this article. If any section of this article is determined to be voided or invalid, the validity of article’s remainder shall not be affected thereby. The city council does not intend to violate the Constitution of the State of Mississippi or the Constitution of the United States of America in the implementation of this article.

(Ord. No. 2007-25(7), § 1, 8-9-07; Ord. No. 2008-16(6), § 1, 5-20-08)

Sec. 86-59. Continuing evaluation.

The city council will continue its evaluation and updating of this article through methods including, but not limited to, at the end of each school year, after the implementation of this article, the chief of police shall provide the city council with a report concerning the effect of this article on crimes committed by and against minors, and of the number of warnings issued and arrests of minors and parents or legal guardians hereunder, and such other information as the city council may request.

(Ord. No. 2007-25(7), § 1, 8-9-07; Ord. No. 2008-16(6), § 1, 5-20-08)

Sec. 86-60. Expiration (“sunset provision”).

This article shall expire and shall be null and void on September 9, 2026. This provision is included herein to ensure that the effectiveness and necessity of the article will be reviewed by the city council within a reasonable time after its adoption.

(Ord. No. 2007-25(7), § 1, 8-9-07; Ord. No. 2008-16(6), § 1, 5-20-08)

Sec. 86-61. Notice.

The city clerk shall provide notice of this article and of the curfew regulations established herein by having copies of the article posted in, on, or about such public or quasi-public places as may be determined by the mayor, city council, and police department so that the public may be constantly informed of the existence of the article and its amendments and regulations.

(Ord. No. 2007-25(7), § 1, 8-9-07; Ord. No. 2008-16(6), § 1, 5-20-08)

Sec. 86-62. Cumulative nature of article.

This article shall be cumulative and in addition to any other laws and regulations in force.

(Ord. No. 2007-25(7), § 1, 8-9-07; Ord. No. 2008-16(6), § 1, 5-20-08)

Secs. 86-63—86-85. Reserved.

THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED that the Jackson City Council hereby re-enacts Jackson, Mississippi, Code of Ordinances, Article II Sections 86-51 through 86-62.

Council Member Stokes moved adoption; Council Member Clay seconded.

Yeas – Brown-Thomas, Clay, Foote, Grizzell, Hartley, Parkinson and Stokes.  
Nays – None.  
Absent – None.

ATTEST:  
Angela Harris  
Municipal Clerk

I, Angela Harris, the duly appointed qualified Municipal Clerk and lawful custodian of records and seal of said City of Jackson, Mississippi, certify that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of an Order passed by the City Council at its Regular Council Meeting September 23, 2025 and recorded in Minute Book “7B, Pgs. 1744-1754”.

WITNESS my signature and official seal of office, this the 4th day of December, 2025.

Angela Harris, Municipal Clerk

LEGAL

**NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A REZONING**

**ZONING CASE NO. 4315**

By virtue of and pursuant to the authority and direction of that Ordinance by the City Council of Jackson, Mississippi, appearing in Minute Book 3G at page 115 thereof, notice is hereby given to all persons interested in or in any way affected thereby, that Terrence Brent, Sr. has filed with the Planning Board for the City of Jackson, an application requesting a Rezoning from C-2 (Limited) Commercial District to C-3 (General) Commercial District to allow for the operation of a skating rink for the property located at 540 Raymond Rd-Ste. B (Parcel 217-9). in the First Judicial District of Hinds County, Mississippi, and being more particularly described as:

A certain parcel of land situated in the East 1/2 of the Southwest Quarter of Section 8, Township 5 North, Range 1 East, Jackson, Hinds County, Mississippi, and being more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at the Southwest corner of that certain ten acre tract conveyed by Henry and Anne Moore to W.E. Johnson by Warranty Deed recorded in Deed Book 227 at Page 126 in the office of the Chancery Clerk of Hinds County at Jackson, Mississippi; run thence Easterly along the South line of said ten acre tract for a distance of 4.0 feet to the Point of Beginning of the parcel of land herein described; from said Point of Beginning, turn thence left through a deflection angle of 88 degrees 21 minutes 49 seconds and run Northerly 4.0 feet East of and parallel to the West line of said ten acre tract for a distance of 458.20 feet; turn thence left through an interior angle of 91 degrees 38 minutes 11 seconds and run Easterly for a distance of 481.43 feet to a point on the East line of said ten acre tract; said point also being on the West line of Glenwood Subdivision, a subdivision according to the map or plat thereof on file and of record in the office of the Chancery Clerk of Hinds County at Jackson, Mississippi; turn thence left through an interior angle of 88 degrees 25 minutes 10 seconds and run Southerly along the East line of said ten acre tract and West line of Glenwood Subdivision for a distance of 183.19 feet; turn thence left through an interior angle of 91 degrees 34 minutes 50 seconds and run Westerly for a distance of 175.0 feet; turn thence left through an interior angle of 268 degrees 25 minutes 10 seconds and run Southerly for a distance of 275.0 feet to the South line of said ten acre tract; turn thence left through an interior angle of 91 degrees 34 minutes 50 seconds and run Westerly along the South line of said ten acre tract for a distance of 306.88 feet to the Point of Beginning, containing 172,498.08 square feet or 3.96 acres, more or less.

Said application will be heard at the City Planning Board Hearing in the Andrew Jackson Conference Room, First Floor, Warren A. Hood Building, 200 S. President Street in Jackson, Mississippi, at 1:30 p.m., on Wednesday, December 17, 2025, at which time all parties interested in or affected thereby will be heard both pro and con on said question, after which a record will be established upon which the City Planning Board can make its recommendation to the City Council of Jackson. Any objection thereto may be made by any person owning property within the area, and if made in writing must be filed with the City Zoning Administrator before said time if a hearing thereof or consideration thereof is desired, or by counsel on said date. If a request is made to the Zoning Administrator at least 72 hours in advance, the City will take steps to accommodate citizens need for interpreters or auxiliary aids for the visually/hearing impaired.

DUE TO THE CONCERN FOR THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE, THE PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS, APPLICANTS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC HAVE THE OPTION TO ATTEND THE MEETING VIA TELECONFERENCE/VIDEO. PLEASE EMAIL EAINSWORTH@CITY.JACKSON.MS.US TO REGISTER FOR THE TELECONFERENCE/VIDEO INFORMATION PRIOR TO DECEMBER 10, 2025.

WITNESS my signature this 20th day of November 2025.

/s/Ester L. Ainsworth  
Zoning Administrator  
City of Jackson, Mississippi

11/27/2025 12/11/2025

LEGAL

**NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A REZONING**  
**ZONING CASE NO. 4316**

By virtue of and pursuant to the authority and direction of that Ordinance by the City Council of Jackson, Mississippi, appearing in Minute Book 3G at page 115 thereof, notice is hereby given to all persons interested in or in any way affected thereby, that William Lake has filed with the Planning Board for the City of Jackson, an application requesting a Rezoning from R-1 (Single-Family) Residential District & R-5 (Multi-family) Residential District to NMU-1 Neighborhood (Mixed Use) District, Pedestrian Oriented to allow for a residential subdivision for the properties located at Parcels 20-38, 20-41 & 20-42 on N. Jefferson St.. in the First Judicial District of Hinds County, Mississippi, and being more particularly described as:

Parcel 20-38  
Lot Five (5) of Ewing Subdivision of 5-Acre Lot 8, North Jackson, as shown by map or plat of said subdivision on file and of record in the office of the Chancery Clerk of said County, at Jackson, Mississippi in Plat Book “A” at Page 233, reference to same being in aid of and as a part of this description.

Parcel 20-41  
Lot 9 of Ewing Subdivision of Five (5) Acre Lot No. Eight (8), a North Jackson, a subdivision according to a map or plat thereof on file and of record in the office of the Chancery Clerk of Hinds County, at Jackson, Mississippi, recorded in Plat Book A, at Page 233, reference to which is hereby made in aid of and as a part of this description

Parcel 20-42  
Lot 9 of Ewing Subdivision of Five (5) Acre Lot Eight (8), North Jackson, Mississippi according to a map or plat thereof which is on file and of record in the office of the Chancery Clerk of Hinds County, at Jackson, Mississippi, in Plat Book “A” at Page 233, reference to which is hereby made in aid of and as a part of this description.

Parcel 20-48  
East ½ of Lot 15 of Ewing Subdivision of 5 Acre Lot No. 8 North Jackson together with all right, title, and interest in mutual driveway, a subdivision according to a map or plat thereof which is on file and of record in the office of the Chancery Clerk of Hinds County, at Jackson, Mississippi, in Surveyor’s Record Book A at Page 233, reference to which map or plat is hereby made in aid of and as a part of this description.

Parcel 20-49  
West ½ of Lot 15 of Ewing Subdivision of 5 Acre Lot No. 8 North Jackson together with all right, title, and interest in mutual driveway, a subdivision according to a map or plat thereof which is on file and of record in the office of the Chancery Clerk of Hinds County, at Jackson, Mississippi, in Surveyor’s Record Book A at Page 233, reference to which map or plat is hereby made in aid of and as a part of this description, less and except a strip of land 5 feet in width off the north side of the west ½ of Lot 15

Said application will be heard at the City Planning Board Hearing in the Andrew Jackson Conference Room, First Floor, Warren A. Hood Building, 200 S. President Street in Jackson, Mississippi, at 1:30 p.m., on Wednesday, December 17, 2025, at which time all parties interested in or affected thereby will be heard both pro and con on said question, after which a record will be established upon which the City Planning Board can make its recommendation to the City Council of Jackson. Any objection thereto may be made by any person owning property within the area, and if made in writing must be filed with the City Zoning Administrator before said time if a hearing thereof or consideration thereof is desired, or by counsel on said date. If a request is made to the Zoning Administrator at least 72 hours in advance, the City will take steps to accommodate citizens need for interpreters or auxiliary aids for the visually/hearing impaired.

DUE TO THE CONCERN FOR THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE, THE PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS, APPLICANTS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC HAVE THE OPTION TO ATTEND THE MEETING VIA TELECONFERENCE/VIDEO. PLEASE EMAIL EAINSWORTH@CITY.JACKSON.MS.US TO REGISTER FOR THE TELECONFERENCE/VIDEO INFORMATION PRIOR TO DECEMBER 10, 2025.

WITNESS my signature this 21st day of November 2025.

/s/Ester L. Ainsworth  
Zoning Administrator  
City of Jackson, Mississippi

11/27/2025 12/11/2025



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Advertisement for:  
Bid 26-3276  
Powell Perimeter Fence

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 Tuesday, February 10, 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 all listed projects will be held in person at Powell Middle School 3655 Livingston Road, Jackson, MS 39213 on Friday, January 9, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Attendance at the pre-bid conferences is non-mandatory but strongly encouraged.

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 JPSD 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 Advrtise: 12 December 2025 (Clarion); 11 December 2025 (Jackson Advocate & MS Link)  
• 2nd Advrtise: 19 November 2025 (Clarion) 18 December 2025 (Jackson Advocate & MS Link)  
• Pre-bid Conference: 09 January 2026 (In-person)  
• Final Date for Questions: 30 January 2026  
• Answers to Questions: 04 February 2026  
• Bid Opening Day: 10 February 2026 @ 10:00 A.M.  
• Vendors may be notified of Board Review and Potential Award after the Bid Date

12/11/2025, 12/18/2025

LEGAL

Banking Services-Depository Bid

Depository Bids for 2026 thru 2029 will be received by the City of Jackson, Mississippi on January 6, 2026 at 3:30 pm at City Hall, 219 South President Street. Please submit original and two (2) copies of sealed bids, marked "RFP#94629-010626 Depository Bid" to the following address prior to or on January 6, 2026 by 3:30pm.

City of Jackson, Mississippi  
Attention: Municipal Clerk  
219 South President Street  
Jackson, MS 39201

Depository bids must be submitted in compliance with Mississippi Code Section 27-105-315 and related Mississippi Code Sections 27-105-305 and 27-105-353.

Depository bid specifications may be received by contacting the City of Jackson, Mississippi as follows:

Department of Administration  
Attention: Courtney Bell  
200 South President Street  
Jackson, MS 39201  
Telephone (601) 960-2005

12/11/2025

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4331 Highway 80W

DOLLAR GENERAL

5990 Medgar Evers Blvd

DOLLAR GENERAL

1214 Capitol St (Downtown Jackson)

DOLLAR GENERAL

304 Briarwood Dr

DOLLAR GENERAL

2855 McDowell Rd

DOLLAR GENERAL

104 Terry Rd

J & A FUEL STORES

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Fortification and I-55

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REVELL ACE HARDWARE

Terry Rd (South Jackson)

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380 W. Woodrow Wilson Ave

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A & I

716 Roby Street - Canton, MS

B & B

702 West North Street - Canton, MS

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3355 North Liberty - Canton, MS

BULLY'S STORE

Church Street - Canton, MS

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Martin Luther King Drive - Canton, MS

HAMLIN FLORAL DESIGN

285 Peace Street - Canton, MS

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507 Church Street - Canton, MS

K & K ONE STOP

110 West Fulton Street - Canton, MS

LACY'S INSURANCE

421 Peace Street - Canton, MS

SOUL SET BARBER SHOP

257 Peace Street - Canton, MS

TRAILER PARK GROCERY

22 Westside Drive - Canton, MS

BYRAM

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VOWELL'S MARKET PLACE

5777 Terry Road

CITY HALL

Terry Road

CLINTON

DOLLAR GENERAL

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CITY HALL

West Cunningham Avenue

RAYMOND

HINDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

WELCOME CENTER

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SUNFLOWER GROCERY

122 Old Port Gibson Street,

Raymond, MS

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120 E. Main Street,

Raymond, MS

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P R E S E R V E D

# The Immortal Life of Peace

By Shewanda Riley  
Columnist



The story of Henrietta Lacks, a Virginia mother whose cells have transformed medical research for over 60 years, is both amazing and heart-breaking. Cells taken from her body without her consent during her treatment for cervical cancer at Johns Hopkins University in the 1950's have proven to be the most medically viable cell line. A 2010 book and HBO movie about Lacks stirred up interest in her story and that of the family that she left behind when she died of cervical cancer in 1951.

Her cells have a unique biological makeup that allow them to reproduce and grow indefinitely. This allows them to be more likely to withstand various scientific experiments that look for the cause and possible cures of countless diseases including polio and

HIV.

Henrietta Lacks shows through medical research what we as Christians know: we are capable of reproducing over time. The question is what are we reproducing? Is it Christ-like compassion or is it fear, negativity and strife? Like the HeLa cells produce indefinitely, we should strive to have a long term and transformative impact on our family, friends and co-workers. Romans 14:19 provides a hint of how this can be done "So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up-building." I admit that striving for peace can sometimes be hard but an experience I once had reminded me that the way of peace is always the best way.

A few years ago, I returned some jewelry to Macy's. Because it was the busy Christmas holiday sales season, the sales clerks were helping other customers. Rather than huff impatiently, I was surprised by how peaceful I was despite the long wait. The salesclerk

who

processed the return was friendly and made the usual polite conversation about the busy holiday season. In the midst of our conversation, I noticed that he had on a yarmulke (skull cap) so I asked him if he was Jewish. He confirmed that he was and then shared how he'd moved to Texas to attend school and learn more about his Hebraic heritage. By the time he finished the transaction, he also shared about his place of worship and invited me to visit sometime. I politely accepted the invitation but didn't think twice about it until about 1 year later when I ran into this same man at an awards ceremony at my job.

What initially caught my attention was a black man in black yarmulke from a distance congratulating his son on getting an award. "Was that the same guy from Macy's?" I wondered. After all, I asked myself, how many heavy set African American middle-aged men wear yarmulkes?

Figuring it would not hurt to ask if he'd ever worked at Macy's, I walked over and asked him. With a smile he confirmed that he had. Though our conversation was brief, I walked away thankful that when we'd met over a year ago that I'd been pleasant.

Sometimes we think having an impact on people has to involve big gestures. But like the initial small amount of HeLa cells have changed modern medical research, the biggest impact can sometimes be what we reproduce in others through small gestures of peace and compassion. As we continue with the hustle of the holiday season, let's strive to reproduce Christ-like love and grace.

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](mailto:preservedbypurpose@gmail.com) or follow her on Twitter @shewanda

## Black church's new-generation elders take up freedom battle

*Installation of Pastor Kevin Lamár Peterman at historic DC church indicates next power move for social justice in America*



Pastor Kevin Lamár Peterman

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Trice Edney Communications

It was on Nov. 24, 2014, when then-Howard University student Kevin Lamár Peterman first felt a sermon rise from his belly.

That was the same day that a grand jury decided not to indict a white Ferguson, Mo., police officer, Darren Wilson, in the fatal shooting of 18-year-old Mike Brown, an unarmed Black teenager walking down the street in his neighborhood. It was a police killing that sparked historic protests across America; including fiery demonstrations in Ferguson that were met with military force.

Having returned from the uprisings in Ferguson, Peterman was leading a community and student protest on the steps of Howard's Douglass Hall when the announcement came that Wilson would not be indicted.

"I remember giving a speech that night that I felt turn into a sermon. And it was really social justice that led me to ministry," Peterman said in a recent interview. "I felt that the best way to advance the cause of Black people in America was through the church and through education. And so that's kind of how my ministry began."

A little more than 10 years later, the stirring that Peterman felt that night had now come full circle. On Saturday, Nov. 15, 2025, at the age of 32, he was installed pastor of the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, the oldest and most historic Black Baptist congregation in Washington, D.C., dating back through enslavement more than 180 years.

Today, as issues of racial justice continue to simmer — and grow — across the nation, the pastoral installation of Peterman and other young men and women in his age group is being viewed as a resurgence of sorts, part of a spiritual uprising of a new generation of civil rights leadership in the Black church.

"What you're seeing is that there are a number of young Black preachers who are taking over historic Black churches in historic cities, who are doing this work of social justice and also doing the work of social impact while also preaching

salvation," Peterman said. "Every generation of ministers is called to move the thermometer one notch, one pace forward. It's like a race. The baton has been passed to the next generation to run our leg of the race."

Among those who have risen to church leadership from coast to coast — during what Peterman describes as the "Black Lives Matter" era is Melech Thomas, who led protests alongside him after the Baltimore police custody death of Freddie Gray. Thomas was installed pastor of Baltimore's Payne Memorial AME Church earlier this year.

Also, the Rev. Devon Jerome Crawford, pastor of the Third Baptist church in San Francisco, the home church of former Vice President Kamala Harris; the Rev. Art Gordon is pastor of the oldest Black Baptist church in New England, the People's Baptist church in Boston; the Rev. Malcolm J. Byrd is senior pastor of the Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the oldest Black Church in New York State, founded in 1796; the Rev. Marissa Farrow has been named senior pastor-elect of Baltimore's Mt. Calvary Church & Ministries; and the Rev. Rodney Carter is pastor of the Greater Mount Calvary Holy Church, the largest Pentecostal congregation in D.C.

"So, you're seeing a new generation of pastors coming into the pulpit and taking over historic churches and many of us are trying to do the work that was being done 60 years ago, prior to the civil rights movement," Peterman says. "It's not a new vision. It's a continuum. And hopefully, when we die, life in America will be better than it was when we were born."

Therefore, during the services surrounding Peterman's installation, it was made clear that his generation would not carry the mantle alone. As they rise to leadership, they join their mentors, their fathers and mothers in ministry who remain alongside them in the preaching of salvation, the battle for social justice, and the sharing of wisdom and experience.



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# Why exercise must be on our 2026 to-do list

By Vince Faust  
*Tips to Be Fit*

As we step into 2026, many of us are setting goals, making resolutions, and sketching out plans for the year ahead. We are budgeting, organizing, and dreaming. But there is one item that deserves a bold, underlined spot on every to-do list this year: exercise. Not as punishment. Not as a fleeting New Year’s resolution. Exercise is a daily act of self-respect, resilience, and renewal.

Exercise is not just about fitting into a smaller size or chasing a number on the scale. It is about reclaiming our energy, protecting our minds, and strengthening our communities, especially in a time when health disparities, chronic illness and stress are weighing heavily on so many of us.

**Exercise Is Brain Food**  
We often think of exercise as something we do for our bodies, but its benefits for the brain are just as powerful. Regular physical activity improves memory, sharpens focus and reduces the risk of cognitive decline. For older adults, it is one of the most effective tools we must delay or prevent dementia. A brisk walk or a few minutes of chair yoga can increase blood flow to the brain, stimulate the growth of new neural connections and boost mood enhancing chemicals like dopamine and serotonin.

In a world where mental fatigue and burnout are rampant, movement is medicine. It is a Heart Thing  
Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States and Black Americans are disproportionately affected. But here is the good news: regular exercise is one of the most powerful ways to protect your heart.

Just 150 minutes of moderate activity per week, which is about 30 minutes a day, five days a week, can lower blood pressure, improve cholesterol levels, and reduce the risk of stroke and heart attack. And you don’t need gym membership or fancy equipment.



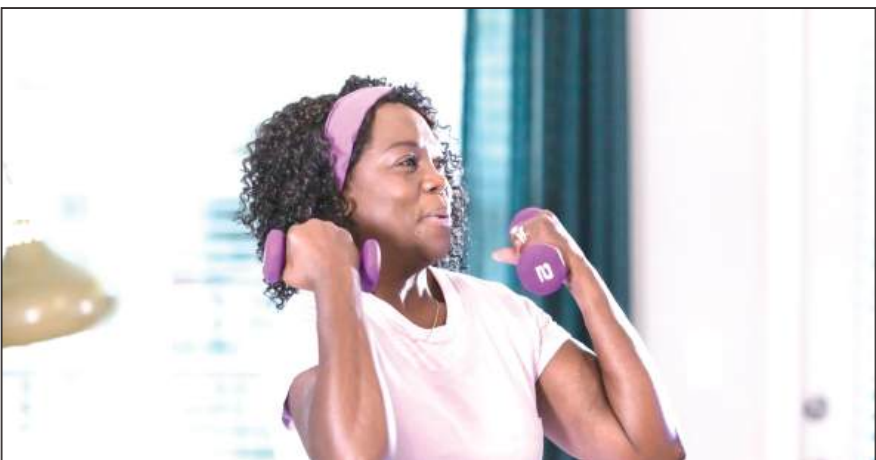
Walking, exercising bands, or dancing in your living room all count. Movement is a love letter to your heart. Let us write it daily.  
**Stronger Bones, Safer Steps**  
As we age, our bones naturally lose density and our muscles weaken. This increases the risk of falls, fractures, and loss of independence. But strength training, even light resistance exercises can slow or reverse that decline. Weight-bearing activities like weightlifting, walking, stair climbing or using resistance bands help maintain bone density. Balance exercises, like tai chi can reduce fall risk.

For older adults, staying active is not just about fitness, it is about freedom.  
**Movement as a Mental Reset**  
In 2026, we are still navigating the emotional aftershocks of a global pandemic, economic uncertainty, and social unrest. Anxiety, depression, and chronic stress are at all-time highs.

Exercise offers a powerful antidote. Physical activity reduces stress hormones like cortisol and triggers the release of endorphins, which are our body’s natural mood boosters. It can also improve sleep, increase self-esteem, and provide a sense of accomplishment.  
For many, movement is a form of therapy. A walk around the block becomes meditation. A bike ride becomes a breath of fresh air. A group fitness class becomes a source of connection.

**A Tool for Health Equity**  
Access to safe, affordable spaces for physical activity is not equal. In many Black and brown communities, decades of disinvestment have left neighborhoods without parks, sidewalks, or recreation centers. That is a public health issue. But even in the face of these barriers, communities have found ways to move. From community-based fitness to double-dutch teams, from step groups to walking clubs, we have always found rhythm in resistance. In 2026, we must continue to advocate for equitable access to movement while also celebrating the creative, culturally rooted ways our communities stay active.

**Movement That Fits Your Life**  
One of the biggest myths about exercise is that it must be intense, time-consuming, or painful to “count.” That is simply not true. Here is what does count:  
• Consistency over intensity. A 10-minute walk every day beats a 90-minute workout once a month.  
• Adaptation over perfection. Can’t get on the floor? Try chair exercise. Can’t run? Try water aerobics or mall walking.  
If you are a beginner have someone who knows what they are doing, take you through your first few workouts. Lifting weights can be dangerous if you do not do the exercises correctly.



Always concentrate on what you are doing. Being careless and taking your movements for granted can cause injury. Concentrating on each repetition when you workout will also recruit more muscle fibers to do work making each repetition more efficient. Always breathe correctly during a resistance-training workout. Inhale during the relaxed phase and exhale during the actual lift. For instance, if you are doing an arm curl (bicep curl) inhale as the weight is lowered and exhale as you lift the weight. Do not exaggerate your breathing, this can cause dizziness. If you’re a beginner have someone who knows what they’re doing take you through your first few workouts. Lifting weights can be dangerous if you don’t do the exercises correctly. Always concentrate on what you’re doing. Being careless and taking your movements for granted can cause injury. Concentrating on each repetition when you workout will also recruit more muscle fibers to do work making each repetition more efficient. Always breathe correctly during a resistance-training workout. Inhale during the relaxed phase and exhale during the actual lift. For instance, if you’re doing an arm curl (bicep curl) inhale as the weight is lowered and exhale as you lift the weight. Don’t over exaggerate your breathing this can cause dizziness. The best exercise is the one you will do—and enjoy doing again tomorrow.

**Making It Stick in 2026**  
So how do we make exercise a lasting part of our lives this year and not just a January fling?  
Here are a few strategies:  
• Schedule it like a meeting. Put it on your calendar and treat it like any other important appointment.  
• Start small. Begin with 5–10 minutes a day. Build from there.  
• Buddy up. Walk with a friend. Join a class. Accountability and community make all the difference.  
• Celebrate progress. Every step counts. Every movement matters. Every drop of sweat is a win.  
In 2026, let us move with intention. Let us move for our health, our joy, our clarity, and our communities. Let us move in ways that honor our bodies and our future.  
If you are reading this and thinking, “It’s too late for me,” let me tell you: it is not. Whether you are 18 or 88, your body is waiting for you to show up. And every time you do, it thanks you. So, write it down. Circle it. Highlight it. Make it bold.  
Move more. Sit less. Start today.  
Exercise is not just something to do, it is something to live for.  
Before starting any health or fitness program consult your physician.  
I want to hear what you think about this article.  
*If you have a fitness question or concern you would like addressed tipstobefit@gmail.com*

# It is not too late to get vaccinated this respiratory season

StatePoint

In a time of confusion and inconsistent information, healthcare professionals want you to know that it is not too late to get vaccinated this respiratory season. Getting vaccinated helps protect against potentially serious diseases like influenza (flu), COVID-19, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and pneumococcal disease. A recent survey from the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) finds that many Americans harbor concerns about vaccine safety and effectiveness or find the guidance on respiratory vaccinations unclear. To address misconceptions around vaccines and promote a healthy winter for you, your family, and communities nationwide, NFID is sharing these insights:  
Vaccination helps prevent severe disease. Vaccination is not just about preventing infection. Most importantly, it is the most effective way to protect yourself and others against severe disease-related outcomes, including hospitalization, long-term



PHOTO SOURCE: (C) PEOPLEIMAGES / ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS

complications, and death due to flu, COVID-19, RSV, and pneumococcal disease. This means that even when vaccination does not prevent infection completely, it can make an illness milder. Vaccines are safe and effective. All recommended vaccines undergo extensive safety testing before approval and continue to be monitored for safety and effectiveness long after they are recommended for use. In the United States and globally, vaccines are held to the highest

safety standards – more stringent than those for almost all other medications. Contrary to a widespread misconception, vaccines cannot cause the diseases they are designed to prevent. While there are potential side effects, they are rare, and much less severe than the diseases vaccines prevent. The most common side effects – sore arm at the injection site, achiness, and fever – are normal signs that the body’s immune system is building protection.

Getting vaccinated helps protect everyone. By preventing severe respiratory illnesses, getting vaccinated reduces your likelihood of missing work or your child missing school. It reduces strain on the healthcare system and helps protect everyone, especially infants and young children, pregnant women, older adults, and people with heart disease, lung disease, or other chronic health conditions. Recommendations are science-based. It is important to follow science-based immunization recommendations. They are based on rigorous review and ongoing research. National medical organizations composed of practicing healthcare professionals recommend these respiratory vaccines based on long-standing evidence and clinical experience:  
• Annual flu vaccination is recommended for everyone age 6 months and older.  
• An updated COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for those at high risk (including young children, pregnant women, older adults, and people with

chronic health conditions), and anyone age 6 months and older who wants to reduce their risk for severe COVID-19 or long COVID.  
• A one-time RSV vaccination is recommended for pregnant women; infants whose mothers did not get vaccinated for RSV during pregnancy should receive a monoclonal antibody to protect against RSV. RSV vaccination is also recommended for certain adults ages 50-74 and all adults seventy-five and older.  
• Pneumococcal vaccination is recommended for children younger than five, all adults fifty and older, and people with certain chronic health conditions or other risk factors. Access may vary. Evolving federal recommendations directly impact the availability and coverage of vaccines. Some states and insurance companies are developing their own coverage rules for vaccines previously recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. If you run into barriers, talk with a trusted healthcare professional who can help you

navigate local restrictions. Healthcare professionals are here to help. Talk with a trusted healthcare professional to learn about the benefits and risks of vaccination against flu, COVID-19, RSV, and pneumococcal disease. These conversations can help you make informed decisions about your health and the health of your family and community. More information about the 2025-2026 respiratory season can be found at <https://www.nfid.org>.  
“It is not too late to get vaccinated this respiratory season. If you have questions about which vaccines are right for you, reach out to your doctor, pharmacist, nurse, or other healthcare professional,” says Robert H. Hopkins, MD, NFID medical director. “I am confident enough in these vaccines that I have been vaccinated, as have all my family members. I encourage others to be immunized so they have the same protection I give to my family and to my patients.”



# Mississippi Black Leadership Summit Concludes Day One with Unified Call to Action on Economic and Civic Power

Mississippi Link Newswire

The Mississippi Black Leadership Summit (MBLS) 2025, hosted by One Voice and Hope Policy Institute, successfully concluded its opening day Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2025 drawing elected officials, community organizers, and policy experts to the Convention Center under the theme, “From Vision to Victory: Building Black Power Through Policy, Partnership, and People.”

Day 1, titled “Power of the Collective – Setting the Stage,” was marked by a powerful convergence of data, faith, and grassroots strategy, setting the foundation for co-designing a statewide Black Action Agenda. The day’s discussions reinforced the urgent need for a unified, data-driven approach to addressing long-standing equity gaps in Mississippi.

“This is not about elected positions but local victories in communities to meet the needs of real people every day,” stated Nsombi Lambright-Haynes, Executive Director of One Voice. “The energy in this room confirms that the collective power of Black leaders in Mississippi is ready to move beyond incremental change. We are in a period of resistance, and MBLS is about celebrating victories, but also confronting hard truths,



Keynote Speaker-Lakeisha Hood Moise PHOTOS: COUTESY OF ONE VOICE

setting the stage for policy wins that will transform our communities,” she stated.

Lakeisha Hood Moise, President and CEO of MDC, delivered a powerful keynote address, “From Crisis to Resilience - The Future of Black Leadership in Mississippi,” reminding attendees by stating, “our power is real and so is our inheritance. We are not building from scratch, but from a foundation laid in struggle, sacrifice,

and brilliance.”

The Plenary Panel, “The State of Black Mississippi: Equity, Data, and Direction,” featured a deep dive into findings from One Voice’s research, highlighting disparities in labor, health, and civic engagement, and providing data to inform targeted policy solutions.

Policy and Finance: Leaders explored practical strategies for economic empowerment in sessions like “Financing Equity:



Delores Bolden Stamps, President and CEO of Bolden Stamps Group; Dr. Antwon Woods-Dean, School of Business, Alcorn State University during the Financing Equity: CDFIs, HBCUs and Pathways to Community Wealth Panel.

CDFIs, HBCUs, and Pathways to Community Wealth.” Separately, Michael Leachman of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities outlined actionable steps for “Translating Community Vision into Policy Wins.”

Intergenerational Leadership: Sessions focused on lifting diverse voices, including “Our Turn: Youth Voices Leading the Way” and “The Future of Black Women’s Leadership: Policy, Power & The Black Ac-

tion Agenda,” ensuring the new agenda is inclusive and forward-looking.

Call to Faith and Action: Luncheon speaker Dr. C.J. Rhodes, Pastor of Mt Helm Baptist Church, delivered an inspiring message on “Faith, Freedom & Forward Strategy,” connecting the struggle for justice to a moral and spiritual imperative for change encouraging people to get involved in the fight.

One Voice is a decades-old

social justice organization that aims to lift the voices of underserved and marginalized communities in Mississippi and the Deep South. They convene and connect organizations around its core program areas--education equity, criminal justice, civic engagement, and fiscal policy. Its central work is providing technical assistance, resources, training, and research to community and social justice organizations.

## Baby Depot Donations Ease Diaper Insecurity during the Holiday Season

Mississippi Link Newswire

Santa made an early stop at the Baby Depot, delivering gifts and cheer just in time for the holiday season. The Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health received generous donations of infant formula from Converge and diapers, wipes, socks, and gloves from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® Gamma Rho Chapter, to support its Baby Depot program.

The donations arrive at a critical time for many Mississippi families. According to the National Diaper Bank Network, one in three U.S. families struggles with diaper insecurity, and many households report having to choose between purchasing diapers and paying for food, utilities or transportation. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that diapers can cost families more than \$100 per month per child. That financial strain intensifies during the holiday season as parents balance diaper needs with buying Christmas gifts, rising heating costs, and preparing holiday meals.

The Baby Depot program provides free diapers, wipes, formula, and period products to over 300 families each year. The program helps parents avoid tough choices, like delaying diaper purchases or stretching diaper use, by giving them the supplies needed to keep their babies clean and healthy.

With rising costs and growing demand, community partnerships like those with Converge and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® play a vital role in ensuring families receive timely and dependable support, particularly during the holidays. These contributions also help the Institute maintain consistent access to supplies that support families throughout Mississippi.

Individuals or organizations interested in supporting the Baby Depot may contact Latasha Rice at lrice@



Converge staff members (l-r) J'Bria Iyalla, clinic manager, and Renata Chatman, MSN, RN, WHNP-BC, vice president of clinical services, presented 27 boxes of infant formula to Latasha Rice, maternal and child health program manager for the Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health.



Latasha Rice, program manager at the Institute of Minority Health received diapers, wipes, and other baby items from Shelby Hudson, a JSU student and president of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Gamma Rho Chapter.

advancingminorityhealth.org or visit minority-institute.org/donations. In-kind and financial donations are welcome. All monetary contributions are tax-deductible.

The Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health was established in 2019 to reduce health disparities among disadvantaged and underserved minority populations in Mississippi through the development of collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders and the implementation of evidence-based public health interventions with a particular focus on health equity.

## Jim Hill High School Student Council

### Partnership to Impact Leadership

Jim Hill High School  
MSASC Leadership Conference 2026

Theme: “Leading with H.E.A.R.T. (Humility, Equity, Authenticity, Resolution, and Teamwork)  
Date: March 27-28, 2026  
Venue: Jim Hill High School  
Organized by: Jim Hill High School Student Council, Advisors, and Booster

Greetings!

I can not express the joy we have to serve as host for our upcoming MS State Association of Student Council (MSASC) Conference. This conference is a fascinating event designed to empower young leaders from schools across the state. The conference will bring together students, educators, and community mentors to share ideas, develop leadership skills, and inspire action in schools and communities. Our mission is to equip high school student leaders with the tools, confidence, and vision to lead with integrity, empathy, and innovation. This is an exciting experience for our school, district, and city to welcome student leaders from across the state and highlight the strength of our community.

#### Event Overview

- Expected Attendance: 300-500 student leaders and advisors from various high schools
- Target Audience: High school student council members, possibly middle school class officers, club leaders, and educators
- Program Highlights:
  - Inspiring keynote speakers
  - Leadership skill-building workshops
  - Student networking and collaboration sessions
  - Team-building activities and community service project
  - Awards and recognition ceremony

By sponsoring this event, your organization will:

- Invest in the next generation of community and business leaders
- Gain visibility among students, parents, educators, and school communities
- Show your commitment to youth development and education
- Connect with motivated young people who represent future customers, employees, and innovators
- Enhance your brand’s reputation through community engagement and support

Your support will help cover costs such as materials, speaker honorariums, meals, and leadership resource kits for students.

We invite you to join us in supporting the leaders of tomorrow. Your sponsorship will make a direct impact by providing students with meaningful leadership development opportunities and inspiring them to create positive change in their schools and communities.

Thank you for considering a partnership with the Jim Hill High School Student Council, together, we can help shape the future of leadership.

Sincerely,

Tammy Cox

Tammy Cox, Ed.S.  
JHHS Student Council Advisor  
MSASC Council Treasurer



### PLATINUM SPONSOR - \$2,000+

- Logo on all promotional materials, event signage, and student t-shirts
- Opportunity to address attendees during the opening or closing ceremony
- Recognition on school social media and website
- Certificate of appreciation and/or sponsor recognition plaque

### GOLD SPONSOR - \$1,000

- Logo on event materials and social media posts
- Verbal acknowledgment during the conference
- Half-page feature in the digital program
- Option to include promotional materials in student gift bags

### SILVER SPONSOR - \$500

- Logo on event program and social media
- Verbal acknowledgment during the conference
- Recognition in thank-you communications

### BRONZE/COMMUNITY PARTNER - \$250 OR IN-KIND SUPPORT

- Recognition on event website and program
- Option to provide in-kind donations (e.g., printing, refreshments, supplies, giveaways)
- Certificate of appreciation

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Attention: Tammy Cox, Student Council Advisor





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## From freshman dreams to graduation glory: JSU student turns lessons into real-world impact

By Aron Smith  
Jackson State University

Long before he knew the campus, the classrooms or the people at Jackson State University, senior Joel Murchison knew one thing for sure: he belonged in the Sonic Boom of the South.

“I didn’t even take a tour,” said Murchison. “I just knew I loved that band. No matter what, I was coming to Jackson State.”

In fall 2020, Murchison did just that. He joined the iconic marching band, playing the baritone until spring 2023. That initial drive led the Atlanta native into a college experience that he says challenged him, helped him grow and showed him he could become a leader, creator, and innovator.

“Jackson State saved my life, for sure. I wasn’t on the path I’m on now. However, JSU gave me a purpose,” said Murchison, a senior music education major with a minor in marketing.

Everything changed for Murchison when his freshman roommate, the late Jalen “JB” Burns, stepped into their dorm room. Burns’ encouragement inspired him to create a YouTube channel illustrating what life at JSU is like.

That motivation helped Murchison find his voice and improve his storytelling skills. In that instant, a brotherhood formed. At the time, he could not imagine the opportunities that would grow from that moment.

“JB helped me break out of my shyness,” he said. “He pushed me in all the right ways. It changed everything, and I realized I could connect with people in ways I never knew possible.”

As his academic journey progressed, Murchison gained experiences that helped him better understand how people learn, communicate, and respond. Through his music education coursework, he taught students at Blackburn Middle School, requiring him to manage a class, simplify ideas and keep students engaged.

Outside the classroom, Murchison gained a deeper understanding of marketing through his retail job at TJ Maxx. There, he learned about customer service, consumer behavior, and the importance of building rapport with people from varying backgrounds.

“Teaching and marketing are similar. You’re connecting, communicating, and keeping people engaged,” said Murchison. “That’s when I realized my degree wasn’t limiting me. It was preparing me.”

During fall 2022, Murchison increased his on-campus activity by joining new organizations, expanding his skills, and creating connections he had been too shy to pursue. He said the experience marked a turning point in his life.

“I knew I couldn’t keep holding back,” he said. “That was the semester I started pushing myself to grow.”

That momentum set the stage for one of his most significant efforts: a project he later called RapidRelief AI, a disaster-response platform focused on identifying problems, assessing damage, and supporting emergency responsiveness.

Murchison created RapidRelief AI in 2024 after participating in a workshop through the HBCU Founders Initiative, where students were tasked with developing ideas to enhance climate change awareness and community resilience.

The app focused on a crucial but straightforward problem: locating survivors and



Atlanta native, Joel Murchison prepares to graduate from his dream university.  
PHOTO BY ARON SMITH

assessing damage during natural disasters within the first 72 hours. Murchison sought to investigate how AI and low-cost tools could enhance emergency response times.

“The goal is to make the response process faster and more efficient,” he said. “If responders can see where damage is or where survivors are located, that could help them act sooner.”

The platform focuses on detection and assessment. Drones equipped with thermal and human-sensing technology help locate areas in need of immediate support by detecting potential survivors.

Simultaneously, AI tools compare images from before and after disasters, creating reports and damage assessments to help first responders and insurance companies respond more efficiently.

Murchison developed the prototype using AI tools and supplemental learning from computer science classes at JSU.

“I didn’t come from a technical background,” he said. “I had to learn everything step by step. I was learning while building.”

Jackson State student volunteers are helping him improve the technology by adding smart-motion detection to the drone system. The platform also includes learning materials on disaster preparedness and resources for affected communities.

“We’re still improving it,” he said. “There’s a lot we want to test in real-world settings, especially with emergency response groups.”

As RapidRelief AI gained traction, Murchison’s work drew national attention. The app, less than a year old, created new opportunities for the young innovator.

According to Murchison, interviews by AfroTech Insider and EBONY led to conversations with “Shark Tank” executives about the idea’s potential. The national coverage expanded awareness of his work far beyond campus.

“Seeing those features made me realize the work was reaching people outside of JSU,” he said. “It showed me that the ideas we build here can go further than we expect.”

He also continued to serve his “dear ole college home.” Murchison created “Up the Price,” a professional symposium designed to help students transition into post-graduate life, and launched the Adobe Student Ambassadors program, which grew to more than twenty-five members in its first semester.

“I want to help build pathways that students can use long after I graduate,” he said. “Success is when your work uplifts someone else.”

Murchison plans to represent “Thee I Love” by returning as a creator of companies, pipelines, and opportunities.

## JPS Recognizes Excellence: 2025–26 “Of the Year” Award Winners

JPS Newswire

Each year, Jackson Public Schools celebrates the people who go above and beyond for their scholars... those who show up early, stay late, inspire big dreams, and keep our schools moving forward.

At their Night of Stars Gala in November 2025, they recognized this year’s Teacher, Administrator, and Support Staff Honorees. And on December 5, they surprised their Parent of the Year with an unforgettable announcement during a special press conference.

These honorees represent the very best of JPS.

Rakesia Gray, teacher of the year, is an eighth-year educator at North Jackson Elementary who brings intention, heart, and high expectations to every scholar she teaches. After discovering her passion for working with young people through coaching at Belhaven University, she transitioned into K–12 education, where she found her calling in the third-grade ELA classroom. She holds degrees from Belhaven University and Jackson State University, along with National Board Certification in Early and Middle Childhood Literacy. Outside her classroom, she pours into the school community through leadership roles, mentoring new teachers, and coordinating programs that support scholars in need. Guided by the belief that every child deserves a champion, she strives daily to cultivate confident, curious, goal-driven learners.

Administrator of the Year, Principal Jocelyn Smith has led North Jackson Elementary since 2019, guiding the school to an “A” rating through a clear vision, steady leadership, and a deep belief in what scholars can achieve. With more than 30 years of service in JPS, her career reflects unwavering dedication to the district and its families. She holds advanced degrees in Elementary Education and Educational Leadership, and her commitment to personal growth mirrors the expectations she set for her staff and scholars. Smith is known for building strong relationships, creating a nurturing school culture, and empowering educators to deliver their best work. Her leadership has made a lasting impact on countless scholars and colleagues.

District leader of the year, Dr. Janet Wallace, is a 14-year JPS educator whose work has strengthened teaching, mentoring, and educator retention across the district. A former award-winning classroom teacher at Barack Obama Magnet Elementary, she helped propel the school to #1 in Mississippi through strong instruction and scholar growth. Now serving as Manager of Teacher Support and Retention, she leads key initiatives such as the New Teacher Academy, Mentor Program, and TEACH JPS Scholarship; all designed to build and sustain a thriving teacher pipeline.



Rakesia Gray, Teacher of the Year



Jocelyn Smith, Administrator of the Year



Dr. Janet Wallace, District Leader of the Year



Cianna Jones, Parent of the Year

Dr. Wallace is a respected voice on mentorship and resilience, presenting statewide and serving on multiple advisory councils that support future educators. Her leadership reflects her commitment to ensuring every scholar benefits from highly supported, well-prepared teachers.

Parent of the year, Cianna Jones embodies JPS’s core values through her advocacy, involvement, and genuine care for all scholars. As the parent of a child with exceptionalities, she champions inclusion and works tirelessly to ensure every scholar receives equitable support and access. She is deeply engaged in school initiatives, most notably helping lead efforts that funded stage curtains, chairs, and other resources that enrich scholars’ day-to-day experiences. Jones builds strong, respectful relationships with staff and families, always showing up with solutions and a growth-minded approach. Her commitment to creating a welcoming, supportive school culture made her a standout choice for Parent of the Year.

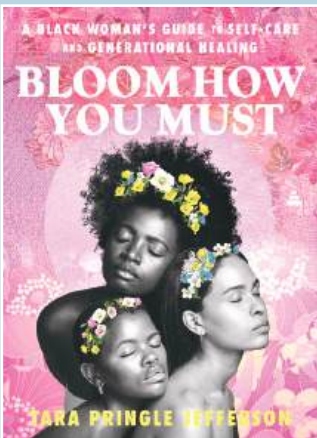
Support staff of the year, Sergeant Judah Jamison is a proud JPS graduate who has dedicated his career to serving the district that shaped him. Since joining JPS in 2020, he has built strong relationships with scholars and staff, first at Wingfield High School and now as a member of the



Sergeant Judah Jamison, Support Staff of the Year

Jackson Public Schools Police Department. After completing the Basic Law Enforcement Training Academy, he continued expanding his skills, earning certifications in crisis intervention, firearms instruction, CPR instruction, and more. Jamison brings steady leadership, compassion, and a commitment to safety that strengthens every school he serves. He credits the administrators and colleagues who invested in him and says his mission is simple: make an impact on scholars and help JPS continue to rise.





# BOOK REVIEW: BLOOM HOW YOU MUST: A BLACK WOMAN'S GUIDE TO SELF-CARE AND GENERATIONAL HEALING BY TARA PRINGLE JEFFERSON C.2025, AMISTAD \$28.00 • 304 PAGES

By Terri Schlichenmeyer  
Columnist

You’ve just about had it. Everything and everybody is on your last nerve, which marks the official end of any self-restraint you might’ve had. You’re out of patience, out of breath, out of any shred of willingness to give things more time. You’re out of cares. Nope, as of now, and in the new book “Bloom How You Must” by Tara Pringle Jefferson, you’re taking care of you now. All it took was a minor health crisis. With two kids, a freelance


business, and eighteen hour days, Tara Pringle Jefferson had been experiencing a lot of pain that she usually powered through – until she couldn’t anymore. Her doctor examined her, then told her to take the weekend off. Seriously, rest. This made Jefferson think. For generations, Black women had made sure what needed doing was done. How did they cope under oppression, overwork, few resources? Looking into the lives of influential Black women in history, she discovered the secret: self-

care. Even Coretta Scott King took time away from Martin and the family, Jefferson says. Black women have a legacy of self-care that’s usually passed down from mother to daughter, and it’s up to each woman to make sure she finds what makes her feel complete again. Jefferson offers ways to get you started. Physical Wellness reminds you to moisturize your skin, eat right, get enough sleep, and enjoy the body you have. Host a sister circle for Social Wellness. Find your own definition of suc-


cess for Professional Wellness. “Do church” in a new way for Spiritual Wellness. Don’t let a need for Mental Wellness to be stigmatized. Find your inner child, learn to play again, and tap into your Creative Wellness. And know that you are a child of survivors who gave you strength but who also passed down inter-generational trauma, so be gentle and kind to yourself. Remember: you’re still rehabilitating. As with most self-help books, “Bloom How You Must” is full of a lot of commonsensical things you probably already

know. Also, as with most self-help books, it’s always nice to be reminded, with the info you need all in one place. The best thing about this self-help book is that author Tara Pringle Jefferson focuses exclusively on the self-care and well-being of Black women only. In doing so, she reaches into history to remind readers that the stress they’re experiencing today is a modern problem, but it’s also nothing new. The care she advocates, therefore, has tinges of ancestry, which is comfortable but can also be surprising, in

that she candidly discusses sex, relationships, and changing the way readers approach their spiritual well-being. Readers who are open and willing to change for better health and happiness may be taken aback by that, but it’s undoubtedly also going to leave you thinking. Men who are curious can absolutely read this book but it’s not for them – it’s purely for Black women who need help they can only get from inside. If that’s you, then find “Bloom How You Must.” Because you must have it.



**ZACK WALLACE**  
Hinds County Circuit Clerk



**Services of the Clerk:**

- Civil/Criminal Filings of Circuit and County Court
- Marriage License
- Medical License
- Voter Registration/Absentee Voting

**FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

Circuit Clerk's Office  
P.O. BOX 327  
Jackson, MS 39205  
Phone: (601) 968-6628  
Fax: (601) 973-5547

**Jury Duty Recording:**

First Judicial District  
(601) 969-0052

**SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

Circuit Clerk's Office  
P.O. Box 999  
Raymond, MS 39154  
Phone: (601) 857-8038  
Fax: (601) 857-0535

**Jury Duty Recording:**

Second Judicial District  
(601) 857-8869

**Office Hours:**

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Monday - Friday  
(Except on legal holiday)

**VOTER INFORMATION**

Verify/Update your Registration Today

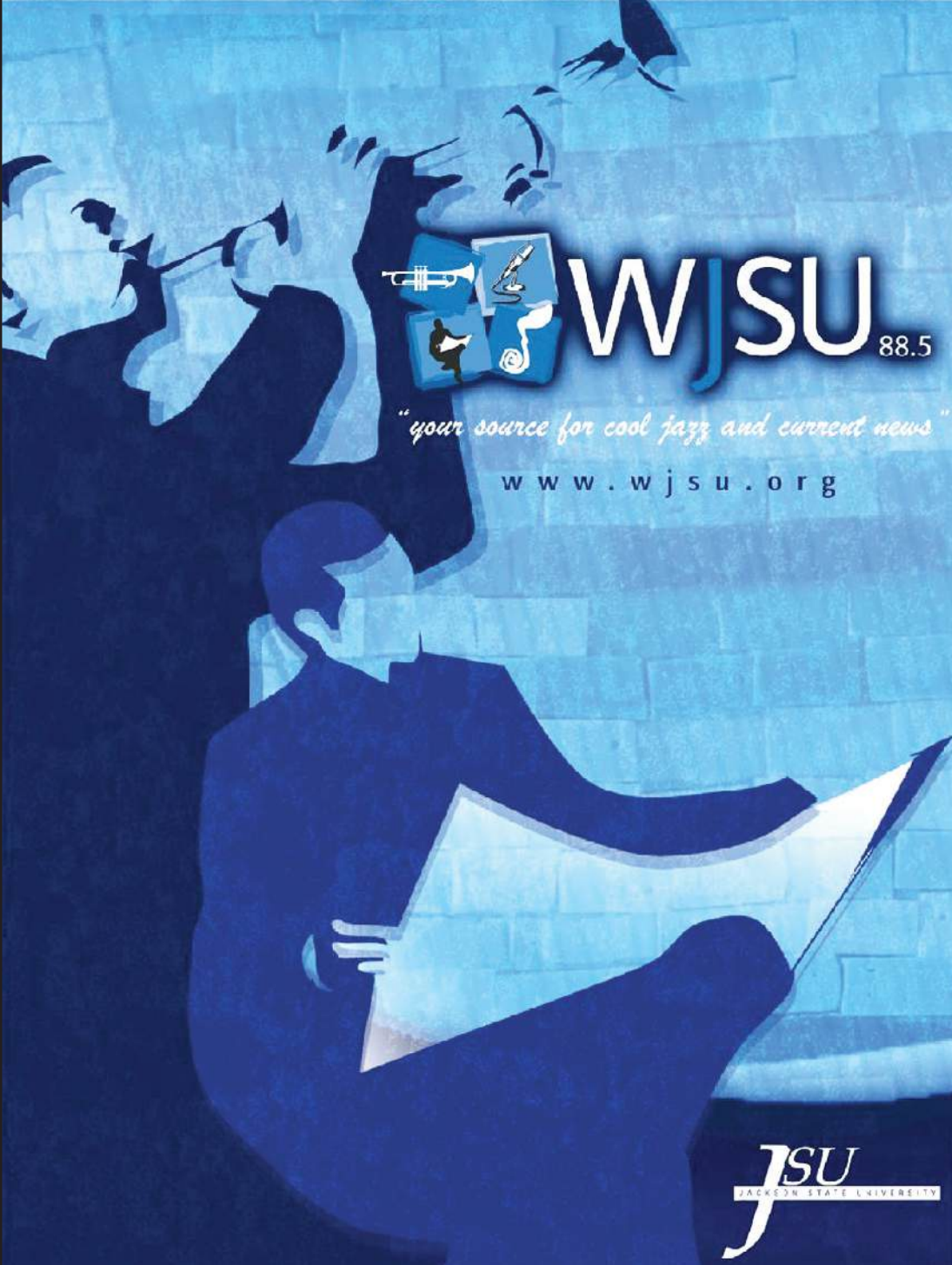
- You must be registered 30 days before the Election.
- Absentee Voting begins 45 days before the Election


**MARRIAGE INFORMATION**

- Marriage License: \$36.00
  - o Both applicants must come to the Circuit Clerk's office together to apply
  - o Proof of age must be provided in the form of Driver's License, Birth Certificate or other legal document which contains name and date of birth.


Website: [www.hindscountymys.com](http://www.hindscountymys.com)  
Paid for by friends of Zack Wallace

# Cool And Current



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# JSU falls 2 points short in SWAC CHAMPIONSHIP Game

By Tim Ward  
Sports Writer

Prairie View vs Jackson State. West Champion vs Back-to-Back East Champion. This past Saturday, “The Vet” hosted the SWAC Championship game in front of a crowd of about 32,000 people. It seemed to be a light crowd, but word is that Tiger Nation was saving funds for Atlanta. The weather was also a contributing factor. Cold temperatures make fans stay home.

Tiger nation was greeted with a surprise. For the first time since the game in Las Vegas, Quarterback Jacobian Morgan was back as the starting quarterback. Amped up and excited, the tigers had their fearless leader once again. 4:22 left in the first quarter, Prairie View’s Senior Quarterback, Cameron Peters, scores on a 7-yard run. Jackson State would score in the second quarter to tie the ballgame up. Quarterback Jacobian Morgan scampered for 29 yards for the touchdown. Crowd goes crazy. However, it seemed to have come at a price. Morgan walked very slowly from the endzone to the JSU sideline. He did not return. Morgan eventually went with the medical staff to the locker room. For the game, he completed 2 of 6 passes for 4 yards and ran for the 29-yard touchdown.

First-year student Jared Lockhart replaced Morgan. Lockhart



SWAC Champions PHOTOS BY TIM WARD

has been the starting quarterback since Morgan was sidelined in Las Vegas. It took the offense until late in the 3rd quarter to score again. While the offense was having its troubles, Prairie View was scoring field goals. The defense was doing an excellent job to keep them out of the end zone. 5:09 in the 3rd, Jaylon Dupree scored on a 22-yard pass from Lockhart. JSU has cut the lead down to 2 points. 16 to

14. Prairie View would match the touchdown on the ensuing drive. Quarterback Cameron Peters connects with Cameron Bonner for a 40-yard touchdown. Panthers lead 23 to 14. Like a good heavyweight boxing match, Jackson State punches back. Running back Ahmad Miller scored on a 2-yard run. Prairie View 23 Jackson State 21.

The teams battle back and forth in the fourth quarter, but no

one scores. Jackson State falls short at home, 23 to 21. Prairie View captures the SWAC Championship for the first time since 2009. The Panthers’ players rush to the field. Tiger Nation stunned. Hopes of repeating as back-to-back National Champions ruined.

Final Stats for the game. Running back Ahmad Miller lead the team in rushing yards with 36 on 13 carries. Quarterback Jared

Lockhart completed 6 of 9 passes for 156 yards with 1 touchdown. Nate Rembert lead JSU in receiving yards with 80 yards on 4 carries. Defensively, Reid Pulliam registered 14 tackles.

The offensive player of the game was Prairie View Quarterback, Cameron Peters. Peters completed 17 of 28 passes for 294 yards with 1 touchdown. He also ran the ball 24 times for 100 yards with 1 touchdown. He was

a 1 man show. Jyzaiah Rockwell had 96 yards receiving on 4 catches. Darrell Starling leads the Panthers defense with 8 tackles.

This Saturday, in Atlanta there will be the Celebration Bowl. The game will be between the MEAC Champion South Carolina State Bulldogs and SWAC Champion the Prairie View Panthers. Kick-off is at 12 pm EST. The game will be shown on ABC.



Prairie View Quarterback Cameron Peters



Jacobian Morgan scores on 29 yard run



PHOTOS BY JAY JOHNSON





# Hinds County School District Weekly Update

## ENGAGING-EMPOWERING-ENSURING-EXCELLENCE

### South Hinds Rotary Club Provides Dictionaries to All Hinds County Third Graders

The South Hinds Rotary Club, in partnership with Hinds County Public Schools, generously purchased and distributed Rotary dictionaries to every third-grade student in the Hinds County School District. These special dictionaries are more than a resource for vocabulary—they include educational features such as Roman numerals, the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, world maps, sign language, and Braille.

Rotarians visited classrooms to personally present the dictionaries and guide students through the many enriching elements inside. Deliveries were made to Bolton Edwards Elementary, Utica Elementary, Raymond Carver Elementary, and Gary Road Intermediate School.

The Hinds County School District extends its sincere appreciation to the South Hinds Rotary Club for their continued partnership and unwavering commitment to student success.

