

Some Scandals Lack Outrage

By Christopher Young
Contributing Writer

Were it not for the tenacious investigative reporting by Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Anna Wolfe, no one would be wiser about what is now known the world over as Mississippi’s Welfare Scandal.

Tens of millions of federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds explicitly intended to support the poorest families in the poorest state in the nation, were diverted from that purpose while the funds were under the administration of former Governor Bryant and his Department of Human Services director, appointee John Davis.

On December 20, 2024, The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), an operating division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, issued a demand letter to Mississippi’s Department of Human Services for repayment of just shy of \$101 million, per numerous sources.

In February 2025, the current director of MDHS, Bob Anderson, wrote back that he needed more time, saying, per Mississippi Today, “... it is the position of the agency that the amount of penalty proposed by OFA is based on insufficient information and is disputed by the agency.”

I wonder how much time he needs? Hopefully it won’t take as long as Mississippi’s ratification of the 13th Amendment (abolishing slavery) – 130 years – then delayed another 18 years due to what then Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann called



Welcome to Mississippi sign on US 61. PHOTO BY THOMAS R MACHNITZKI VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.



Depiction of discrimination. PHOTO: WWW. ZUCKERMANLAW.COM.

COMMENTARY

a clerical error: failing to send the documentation to the U.S. Archivist.

ACF has agreed to hit the pause button on their demand letter. Time will tell if accountability will ever be achieved – accountability is not a strong suit of Mississippi’s leaders. Obviously, caring for the poor and vulnerable isn’t either, despite it being a central theme of The Gospels.

Per localmemphis.com, the current Mississippi Governor, Jonathan ‘Tate’ Reeves, prematurely curtailed participation in a federal rental assistance program in 2022 – returning \$130 million to Washington and calling the program that provided rent and utility assistance to 36,000 households a “socialist experiment program and liberal handouts.”

Then for three years straight, he has opted out of the federal summer grocery benefits pro-

gram that could have helped hundreds of thousands of Mississippi families. Helping those less fortunate is not in Mississippi’s DNA.

Yet it is Mississippi’s annual contracting program that is arguably far worse. Each year billions of taxpayer dollars are doled out to keep the state agencies afloat. Including boards and commissions, there are 130 agencies in the small state of Mississippi, and they all need goods and services to function.

In fiscal year 2025, \$5.519 billion was spent on them through contracts. Basic arithmetic applied to the numbers contained in the state’s annual Minority Participation Report show that over 99% of the expenditures went to white people, less than 1% to non-white people. By the numbers, stark discrimination and racism.

The Census Bureau reports that Mississippi’s total minority population is 45.3%. Imagine if minority contractors received

45.3% of the annual state contracting dollars, instead of less than 1%. That would translate to over \$2.5 billion dollars. Imagine what that money could do for minority families and children, let alone the psychological impact of having a seat at the table, year after year?

Imagine what that could do for African American women in Mississippi who make just 58 cents for every dollar made by a white man in Mississippi? Or to the wealth gap where white Mississippians hold seventeen times more wealth than African American households?

Or to the mortgage denial rate? Or to the rate of banked African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans who too often resort to using costly check cashing services and predatory payday lenders? Just imagine.

Despite what you hear from

Outrage

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Musical Celebration in honor of Carroll Lee McLaughlin held at Cade Chapel Baptist Church



Carroll Lee McLaughlin (Sunrise: April 29, 1989 – Sunset: July 8, 2026)

By Jackie Hampton
Publisher

Carroll McLaughlin, a respected educator, accomplished musician, and proud member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., passed away on July 8, 2026.

His life of service, leadership, and excellence left a lasting impact on family members as well as countless students, colleagues, fraternity brothers, and friends.

A musical tribute honoring McLaughlin was held Thursday, July 23, 2026, at 7 P.M. at Cade Chapel Baptist Church, 1000 West Ridgeway Street, in Jackson. Various musicians, choir members and soloists paid tribute to, “The Man, His Music & His Life.” He was only 37 years old when he transitioned.

Carroll devoted much of his life to educating and inspiring others. As an educator, he had a passion for learning. He was

admired for his patience, and his ability to encourage students to pursue their goals with confidence and determination. He believed in the power of education and worked tirelessly to help young people realize their potential, leaving behind a legacy that extends far beyond the classroom.

Jackson Public School stated on their Facebook page: “Affectionately known by his scholars as Mr. Mac, he began his journey with Jackson Public Schools in 2018 as a music teacher at Bates Elementary School – JPS, where he inspired everyone through the joy and discipline of music.

In 2023, he continued his service at Casey Elementary School – JPS, where he remained a valued member of the school community. Through his teaching, Mr. McLaughlin nurtured creativity, built confi-

McLaughlin

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Native Mississippian Roy Lewis returns home and participates in the MS Museum of Art Groundbreaking Exhibition

By Jackie Hampton
Publisher

The Mississippi Museum of Art, (MMA) 380 S. Lamar Street in Jackson, MS opened its’ landmark exhibit on Saturday, July 25, 2026, presenting “Photography and the Black Arts Movement, 1955–1985.” The exhibit will run through November 8, 2026.

Organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, the exhibit is the final stop on a national tour which explores how American and Afro-Atlantic

diaspora photographers and artists used photography to develop and foster a distinct Black visual culture and identity during the mid-20th century. It examines the role in which these photographers played during the Black Arts Movement, which paralleled the American civil rights and international freedom movements, and highlights strategies for community engagement and self-representation.

The exhibition includes photographic pieces of one hundred photographers, many of which are no longer with us; it comprises approximately 150 works, spanning photography, video, collage, painting, installation, and other lens-based media, some of which have rarely or never been on public view.

Roy Lewis is an American photographer was in Jackson for the opening of the exhibit, which opened one day after his eighty-



Mayor John Horhn presenting a Proclamation to Lewis,” Commending the Distinguished Career and Lifelong Contributions of Mr. Roy Lewis.” PHOTO BY JACKIE HAMPTON

ninth birthday. He sat down with The Mississippi Link for an interview on his birthday expressing how pleased he was to be a part of this traveling exhibit.

He said, “One of the greatest rewards and highest recognition



Photographer John Clark Maden, Baltimore, MD (lt) and Native son Roy Lewis of Natchez (rt) were the two exhibitors at the grand opening of the exhibit. PHOTO COURTESY OF MMA



Photographer, Roy Lewis poses in front of two of his pieces displayed at the MMA exhibit.

of praise is for anyone to have their work featured in a museum.”

Lewis was born in Natchez, Mississippi on July 24, 1937. He grew up on a plantation, as his father toiled as a sharecropper. His

mother died when he was young and was raised by his maternal grandparents. After graduating from high school in 1956, he relocated to Chicago and worked in the subscription department at Johnson Publishing Company.



Nic Lott and Roy Lewis reviewing a pamphlet, at Jakson City Hall.

Soon afterward, he was drafted into the U.S. Army, and while still enlisted he purchased his first camera – an old Kodak Brownie. His early photo-journalistic ca-

Lewis

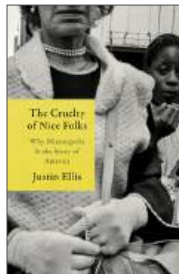
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Inside

Countdown to Nashville:
T.C. Taylor Leads Jackson
State Toward the 2026
Opener



Cruelty of
Nice Folks



Leland High School Class of 1976 Celebrates 50th Reunion: Two Competitive Scholarships were awarded to Class of 2026 Seniors

Special to The Mississippi Link

As part of its 50th class reunion celebration, the Leland High School Class of 1976, known as the “Bicentennial Class,” commemorated the milestone by investing in the future of local students through a philanthropic scholarship initiative.

During May 2026 graduation, two graduating seniors, Jordyn Betts and Makynzie Thornton, were selected from a competitive pool of candidates and recognized for their outstanding academic achievement, engaging community service, and leadership excellence.

Each student received a \$1,200 scholarship award and a beautifully framed certificate as part of the class’s effort to support higher education and encourage continued success.

The Class of 1976 awarded a total of \$2,400 in scholarships, reflecting its commitment to giving back to the community and inspiring the next generation of leaders.

Proud classmate Vanessa Adams generously provided the framed certificates to scholarship recipients and personalized coasters to classmates in attendance and available to those not in attendance. “This reunion and the scholarships were our way of celebrating our past while investing in the future! Both were truly a labor of love” says Adams!

“The Leland High School Class of 1976 proudly congratulates Jordyn Betts and Makynzie Thornton, as well as their families, on this well-deserved recognition,” class representatives said. “We are honored to support these exceptional students and encourage them to pursue their academic goals with confidence and determination.”

The scholarship initiative serves as a lasting tribute to the Class of 1976’s 50-year legacy while reinforcing the importance of educational achievement and community engagement.



(L-R)Jordyn Betts and Makynzie Thornton each received a \$1,200 scholarship for outstanding achievement.



Special coasters for attendees – Compliments of Vanessa Adams



2026 Leland High School Bicentennial Classmates celebrating 50th year anniversary



Pictured above at the Leland High School 50th Reunion: (L-R) Mae Lee Johnson, Demetria Wilson, Vanessa Adams, Jordyn Betts, McKynzie Thornton and Linda William McAdory.

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we’re not just about providing health insurance. We’re creating a strong, supportive community that empowers every Mississippian to live their healthiest life. We make managing your health easier by empowering you with the tools and support you need to take proactive steps toward maintaining and improving your health. Working together, we’re ensuring quality healthcare and wellness opportunities are within reach for all. Because when you are at your best, Mississippi is too.

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It’s good to be blue.



MISSISSIPPI



McLaughlin

Continued from page 1

dence, and enriched the lives of countless scholars. We are grateful for his musical contributions and talents shared with JPS. His legacy will live in the hearts of his scholars, colleagues, and the communities he served.

In addition to his distinguished career in education, McLaughlin was an exemplary musician whose talent and love for music enriched the lives of those around him. Whether performing, mentoring aspiring musicians, or supporting musical programs within his community, he demonstrated an appreciation for the arts that inspired others to cultivate their own gifts.

McLaughlin was a proud and devoted member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., where he exemplified the fraternity’s values of achievement, leadership, and service. His fraternity brothers remember him as a man of integrity, wisdom, and unwavering dedication who faithfully supported the organization’s mission. A Chapter Invisible Ceremony was held in his honor Friday, July 24th at Cade Chapel, prior to the funeral service.

Visitation was held Thursday, July 23rd from 1 PM – 4 PM at Jackson Memorial Funeral Service, 1000 W. Woodrow Wilson, in Jackson; Funeral Services were held, Friday, July 24, 2026, at 10 A.M. at Cade Chapel Baptist Church, Rev. Reginald M. Buckley, officiant; followed by the Interment, which was held at Natchez Trace Cemetery, Madison, MS.



PHOTOS BY JAY JOHNSON

Outrage

Continued from page 1

the Oval Office these days, racism can only be exercised by those of the majority race against those in the minority. Mississippi may well be the epicenter of systemic and institutional racism in America, yet not alone. Come to find out, scandals like this are multi-faceted.

Merriam-Webster says that scandals have six elements – a transgression, public awareness, prominence, hypocrisy, outrage, and cover-up.

It’s easy to see why the TANF public corruption scheme has been referred to as a scandal, some even saying it’s the largest scandal in Mississippi history. Our highly ambitious State Auditor even wrote a book about it – “Mississippi Swindle.”

When it comes to state contracting though, an element is missing – outrage. Could it be that outrage is missing because public awareness is limited? There are no mainstream media platforms in

Mississippi making the public aware of this issue, even when it is brought to the attention of those in charge.

And while some members of the Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus are aware of the issue, scant few have attempted to address it by drafting legislation, an issue that financially cripples their constituents on an annual basis.

Awarding over 99% of annual state contracting

dollars to white people must be perfectly moral, legal, and ethical to the Mississippi State government. There is no outrage because it is by design. So stripping away opportunity, limiting participation, and hurting people that don’t look like you must be moral, legal, and ethical – and unworthy of coverage by Mississippi’s mainstream media?

Afterall, this is Mississippi.

Lewis

Continued from page 1

reer included working as a photographer for the Johnson Publishing Company. Lewis also created photographs of Chicago’s Wall of Respect which is one of the images displayed at the MMA exhibit.

In 1974 Lewis traveled to Zaire, Africa to video the Foreman vs. Ali, boxing match referred to as The Rumble in the Jungle. Some of his footage was included in the 1996 documentary film When We Were Kings.[4]

In 1995 his photos were included in the book The Million Man March published by Three Rivers Press.

Lewis, who resides in Hyattsville, MD, has served many years as a photographer for The Black Press of America. He takes pride

in the many photographs he took of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., James Meredith, and other Civil Rights icons. He stated he was often invited by Margaret Walker Alexander to photograph events she hosted at Jackson State University. He stated “ As much as I enjoy taking pictures, I am not just taking photographs for myself, I am thinking about young people.

During the interview, Lewis received a call from Nic Lott, director of communications for the City of Jackson asking Lewis if he could come to Jackson City Hall and meet with Mayor John Horhn at 12:30 PM. Lewis was honored to have a sit-down conversation with Mayor Horhn in his office where they

shared so much information which they had in common pertaining to the arts, and the civil rights movement. Mayor Horhn presented Lewis with a special proclamation.

After meeting with the mayor, Lewis attended an exclusive Behind-the-Scenes Look at Film JXN Youth Summer Camp located at the Arts Center of MS where he spoke to students attending the two- week camp. City of Jackson first lady welcomed media and campers.

The Film JXN Youth Summer Camp is presented by the City of Jackson Film Office in partnership with 1245 Works, Inc. and United Way of the Capital Area.



Nic Lott introduces First Lady Lydia Horhn to Summer Camp attendees.



Lewis meets City of Jackson, First Lady Lydia Horhn

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Medgar Evers Library Lures Four Hundred+ at Back to School Bash

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

More than 400 hundred children and a number of community parents, grandparents, teachers and leaders covered the grounds and inside domain of Medgar Evers Library, 4215 Medgar Evers Blvd, Jackson, MS 39213, during the School Bash on Tuesday of this week.

The 10 a.m. to 12 noon event – filled with bright sunshine and sweltering heat – brought joy to children who received book bags; face painting; sno-cones; popcorn; and plenty of free food.

This “Working Together/ Building Stronger Communities” occasion was what District 3 Supervisor Deborah Butler-Dixon anticipated it would be, for a community demonstrates its health and wealth when it shares a united front, especially for the good of children.

Taking time with the children were storytellers who shared their knowledge and expertise with books; music; dance; hats and coloring.

Adrianna and Brianna Wang were excited to expose the children to arts and crafts via a variety of hats (turtle; dolphin; whale; starfish; octopus and pufferfish). Both indicated that they “enjoyed seeing the kids enjoy the event and wear their hats with a smile.”

Shalandria Hampton is employed at Jamboree Daycare. She has been attending the school bash at Medgar Evers Library for three or four years. Hers is a message to the parents. “Just bring the kids out, get school supplies; benefit from all the activities and enjoy the festivities.”

Claiming that what happened Tuesday was God’s plan, Byron Brumfield mentioned, “Today was an example of unity, love and peace. Medgar Evers re-loaded a mission and a movement.

The same elements he used 63 years ago, we are using today. We came together with a re-opening, and at the same time, showed the kids a great time – a Back- to-School Party.”

“The Medgar Evers Library needs to be re-opened for the community. A lot of kids don’t have access to the internet. This gives them the opportunity to have reliable internet service in a safe, community space.

People can now find jobs since the library is open. The library has resources to help,” commented Latasha Barnes.

Barnes’ granddaughter Mackenzie Day (11) is a fourth grader at Key Elementary School this year. She concurred with Barnes. “The kids can read more and have reliable internet.”

John Fortenberry and Dewan Jefferson have been working for New Progressive in Jackson for a number of years. They expressed their love for the youth and watching them grow. Voiced Fortenberry, “Today I transported 23 clients. This Bash is good for the children. It lets them know that the accommodating adults and the library personnel are thinking about them.”

Hearing from a trustee is

never too short of learning what are the essentialities of libraries that have served many and are closed by years. That is where Addie Green, CEO – Mississippi Outreach Foundation – and Trustee for Hinds County Library, speaks.

Green expressed satisfaction in the Medgar Evers Library’s air conditioner now working, after having been inoperable for some time. This was ideal for opening the Bash for some 400+ children and community. This back-to-school celebration with the backpacks has ushered in parents, children and community. City Council, the Board of Supervisors and the Library trustees, noted Green.

Four hundred+ children left Medgar Evers Library with smiles and enthusiasm. Accompanied by parents, leaders, supervisors and friends, they left with a willingness to meet the challenges of the 2026-2027 Academic School Year.

With pats on their backs from adults, the community awaits their destiny.



PHOTOS BY JAMES HAMPTON III AND JANICE K. NEAL-VINCENT



Three Mississippi Schools amongst 164 in 44 states awarded grants to improve student health

The American Heart Association

The American Heart Association and the National Football League get students moving nationwide through NFL PLAY 60 funding.

Lower physical activity is taking a toll on the health of American children and contributing to rising obesity rates nationwide. According to new research published in the American Heart Association's flagship journal, *Circulation*, obesity among youth increased by approximately 30% between 1999 and 2023, while severe obesity rose 50%.

To help more students get active, the American Heart Association and the National Football League (NFL) recently awarded NFL PLAY 60 grants to 164 schools in 44 states through the Association's school-based programs, Kids Heart Challenge™ and American Heart Challenge™.

Three schools in Mississippi have been awarded grants and/or equipment to improve student health.

They are:

- Bel Aire Elementary in Gulf-

port - NFL PLAY 60 Physical Activity Grant in the amount of \$2500.

- I.T. Montgomery Elementary School in Mound Bayou - NFL PLAY 60 Flag Football Equipment

- West Wortham Elementary & Middle School in Saucier - NFL PLAY 60 Physical Activity Grant in the amount of \$2500

This marks the third round of NFL PLAY 60 grants awarded in 2026, part of a \$350,000 annual investment from the NFL through its collaboration with the American Heart Association, a relentless force changing the future of health for everyone everywhere.

NFL PLAY 60 grants help schools meet critical wellness needs identified by educators, from equipment and recess enhancements to inclusive physical education and well-being resources.

"Children spend so much of their time in the classroom, which makes schools powerful allies in helping them build lifelong healthy habits," said Nancy Brown, chief executive officer of

the American Heart Association.

"With support from the NFL, we're proud to give schools additional opportunities to promote physical activity and student well-being so more students have a chance to live longer, healthier lives."

Fewer than 1 in 4 children in the United States currently get enough physical activity. NFL PLAY 60 encourages children to be physically active for at least 60 minutes a day, aligning with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.

"For many kids, staying active isn't about interest. It's about access to the right space, equipment and time to move," said Megan Mendoza, senior manager of social responsibility, NFL. "These grants help remove barriers so more students – even those who might otherwise sit on the sidelines – get the chance to jump in and play."

More information on NFL PLAY 60 resources and grant opportunities can be found at heart.org/NFLPLAY60.

SNAP Fraud investigation leads to indictment in Claiborne County

The Mississippi Link Wire

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Office of Inspector General, Division of Investigation, announced a Claiborne County resident has been indicted following an investigation involving the fraudulent receipt of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

Adrianna Allen of Claiborne County was arrested on June 24, 2026, after an investigation determined she improperly received \$28,330.00 in SNAP benefits. The case was referred to the Claiborne County District Attorney's Office where an indictment was secured on June 9, 2026. Allen was subsequently taken into custody by Claiborne County authorities.

"This is a great example of collaboration between our investigations team, MDHS county offices, District Attorneys, and local law enforcement," said Sandra Griffith, MDHS Inspector General.

The investigation was conducted by Agent Griffin with the MDHS Office of Inspector General's Division of Investi-



gation. Established in 2018, the Division of Investigation is responsible for detecting, preventing and deterring fraud, waste and abuse and has recovered millions in SNAP overpayments since its inception.

"This investigation and indictment demonstrate the effectiveness of the safeguards that we have put in place to detect, investigate and prevent fraud," said Robert G. "Bob" Anderson, MDHS Executive Director. "Every step we take to prevent fraud ensures that resources and support will continue to reach the Mississippians who need it most."

An indictment is only an allegation. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Suspected fraud can be reported to MDHS at any time by submitting the Fraud Tip Form online at <http://www.mdhs.ms.gov/report-fraud/>, calling the Fraud Tip Line at 18002996905, or emailing fraud@mdhs.ms.gov.

MISSION: The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) offers Mississippians, young and old, tangible help today to create lasting hope for tomorrow.

ABOUT MDHS: MDHS is a state agency dedicated to serving the people of Mississippi. With offices in all 82 counties, MDHS provides a wide range of public assistance programs, social services and support for individuals and families of all ages – from early childhood to older adulthood.

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NAACP Announces \$20m Voter Registration Drive at National Convention in Chicago

By Erick Johnson
Black Press USA Wire

With just over three months before the midterm elections, the NAACP at its 117th annual convention in Chicago announced an unprecedented \$20 million voter registration campaign ahead of the midterm elections.

The announcement kicked off the NAACP’s national convention at McCormick Place where thousands of visitors and delegates participated in workshops and seminars that stressed the organization’s theme of “We the People” and purpose of educating Blacks about their constitutional rights.

Throughout the week-long convention, vendors sold merchandise, media organizations held onsite interviews in “The HUB,” and visitors signed a massive “We the People” mural.

Governor J.B. Pritzker and Mayor Brandon Johnson were among the dignitaries who reinforced the NAACP’s message during the convention’s opening plenary.

Black voting rights have been under attack in the last several months when Louisiana, Tennessee, Alabama and Florida gutted historic Black congressional districts after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled such districts were unconstitutional and were no longer needed in mod-



ern times despite protections under the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The NAACP, the nation’s oldest civil rights organization, is concerned those decisions will roll back political and economic gains Blacks have made in the last six decades.

NAACP Board Chairman Leon Russell told the opening session that the NAACP would undertake a \$20 million voter registration and mobilization drive “to motivate six million to

10 million voters” who did not cast ballots in the last two elections to do so.

As part of the campaign, the NAACP plans to recruit “tens of thousands of volunteers to join the crusade to turn out millions of us this November.” The plan will target voters in 14 states and 33 congressional districts, with the full list expected to be disclosed later.

“We must move 60 percent or more of all eligible voters to the polls,” Russell said.

The NAACP has a history of leading voter registration drives in Black neighborhoods across America.

In his speech, Pritzker said, “In Washington and across the country, extremists holding high office are working to erase Black history rather than learn from it, to take away voting rights instead of strengthening them, to divide us rather than unite us,” he said.

He added, “These are not simply disagreements over

policy. These are challenges to the very idea that democracy belongs to all of us. Challenges to the very idea that we are all created equal.”

Pritzker said the phrase “We the People” reflects America’s ongoing effort to expand equality, noting that the nation’s founding ideals initially excluded enslaved people, women and other groups.

Mayor Brandon Johnson said, “For 117 years this incredible organization has helped bend the arc of history towards justice. And not because progress was inevitable, but because ordinary people made the extraordinary decision to organize, advocate and refuse to accept injustice as the reigning form of governance.

“That work has never been easy, and today it remains as urgent as it has ever been. Across this country we are witnessing wicked efforts to undermine fundamental rights, weaken Democratic institutions, and to turn neighbors against one another.

“We see attempts to silence the truth and erase our history and convince people that somehow division is stronger than solidarity. But history has taught us something very different. Every time people have been told to accept injustice, they have risen together to re-

ject it.”

During Trump’s second term in office, the NAACP has filed more than 70 lawsuits to stop his grasping and often unconstitutional moves to grab total power.

Pritzker said “Illinois has been at the forefront of the struggle for freedom and equality” ever since Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, a non-white, was the first permanent resident of what is now Chicago, Pritzker noted.

Pritzker also said Illinois gave the nation the crusading African American journalist Ida B. Wells, and it elected more African American members of Congress than any other state. He said Illinois gave the nation the late civil rights leader Jesse Jackson and “a young community organizer” who eventually went from Chicago to the White House, Barack Obama.

“But such progress is not inevitable,” the governor warned. “It requires people willing to sacrifice. None of this is by accident. It is because Black America shows up, reminding us of the painful part of our history while giving us hope for the future.”

(Canonical URL: <https://chicagocrusader.com/naacp-announces-20m-voter-registration-drive-at-national-convention-in-chicago/>)

Trump Shell Game Biggest Grift in World History

BlackPressUSA Newswire

A recent article examines what it describes as an unprecedented use of the Oval Office for private enrichment by former President Donald Trump. While past eras featured monumental acts of plunder, the article argues something different is occurring, with institutions designed to provide checks and balances either looking away or assisting.

History is filled with breathtaking, inhumane thefts. Empires stole land. Colonizers stole labor. Enslavers stole generations. European institutions claimed African achievements as their own. Indigenous nations were stripped of lands that became the United States.

As historian Dr. John Henrik Clarke argued, Europe even “colonized” the image of God.

Those are monumental acts of plunder.

Yet America is witnessing something different: a president, Donald Trump, using the Oval Office as ground zero for unprecedented grift, while many of the institutions designed to provide checks and balances either look the other way or help make it possible

Trump is colonizing his own country. But the greatest scandal isn’t simply the money he’s pocketing; it’s the normalization of turning the Oval Office into a grift machine.

The presidency as a profit center

Every administration faces ethics questions. But Donald Trump’s second presidency has produced a rap sheet of reported conflicts of interest, “the likes of which you’ve never seen” (to use Trump’s own favorite phrase).

Investigative reporting has documented billions in wealth generated through Trump-linked businesses, cryptocurrency ventures, licensing agreements, and investments while he remains in office. Analysts have described an unprecedent-



Unchecked conflicts of interest don’t just enrich politicians—they test whether Americans still believe accountability applies to everyone. CREDIT: CHATGPT — CREDIT: CHATGPT

ed intertwining of presidential power and private enrichment, arguing that loopholes in ethics laws make much of it difficult to challenge.

Really? Congressional Republicans were ready to impeach Barack Obama over a tan suit. Yet now we’re told that legal isn’t always ethical, that ethical isn’t always constitutional, and that constitutional isn’t always enforced.

Whatever. Eric Garner was choked to death by cops for making pennies selling loose cigarettes. Trump robs a whole-ass country blind, and he gets people making excuses. Miss me with that.

Bigger than one transaction
The story isn’t one deal. It’s hundreds.

Foreign governments have done business with Trump-related enterprises. Wealthy individuals have gained exclusive access through Mar-a-Lago. Trump-affiliated branding deals, cryptocurrency ventures, and business partnerships continue to expand.

Meanwhile, critics often find

themselves targeted politically while loyalists receive prestigious appointments or lucrative contracts connected to Trump’s network.

Any one of these stories would have dominated headlines for months in another era. Together, they paint a picture of public office being used for private enrichment. I could have sworn that was illegal.

America250 or Freedom 250?

One of the most symbolic controversies surrounds America’s 250th birthday celebration. Congress created America250 as a bipartisan effort to commemorate the nation’s semi quincentennial. Then came the Trump-backed Freedom 250 initiative.

Freedom 250 has been accused of steering donors and financial support away from America250 toward Trump’s organization, including allegations that prospective donors received Freedom 250 account information instead of America250’s.

Freedom 250 denies wrong-

doing, and investigations continue. If proven, it would represent another example of public institutions becoming vehicles for private political gain.

How fitting that America’s birthday celebration would become entangled in a controversy over money and influence.

Pimping pardons
Another controversy centers on presidential pardons. Reports have described wealthy individuals and politically connected figures receiving favorable consideration while lobbyists charge enormous fees to pursue clemency for clients.

Whether perception or reality, pay-to-play justice undermines public confidence. If this were organized crime, we’d call it gangster. If poor Black people did it, we’d call it criminal. Instead, Trump continues making money while avoiding accountability.

Institutions that looked away
The larger scandal may not be Trump himself. Trump has spent decades cultivating an image built around aggressive dealmaking and pushing ethical

boundaries.

In The Art of the Deal, he celebrated tactics that critics say rewarded refusing to pay and dragging disputes through the courts. Americans knew who he was before they voted.

The Republican-controlled Congress has repeatedly declined to challenge him aggressively. Critics argue the Supreme Court has also strengthened presidential immunity. Federal ethics laws contain loopholes that previous presidents generally respected, but Trump has been willing to exploit.

Major media organizations often favor spectacle over sustained investigations, while social media platforms reward outrage and distraction. The result is accountability delayed — or denied.

The cost to democracy
Corruption is rarely just about money. Every dollar diverted is one unavailable for schools, healthcare, infrastructure, disaster relief, or veterans. Every ethical line erased makes the next violation easier.

Eventually, Americans stop

asking whether something is right and ask only whether it’s legal. That’s how republics die.

History’s warning
Past political scandals – from Watergate forward – generally ended with resignations, prosecutions, congressional investigations, or meaningful reforms.

Today, controversies disappear beneath an avalanche of daily outrage. Critics are demonized. Millions tune out.

Perhaps the greatest grift is convincing Americans that corruption is simply how government works.

What citizens should do
The answer isn’t cynicism. It’s civic engagement.

Vote for candidates committed to ethics and transparency. Demand accountability from every administration, regardless of party. Support investigative journalism that follows the money. Pressure Congress to conduct real oversight. Hold media organizations accountable when they ignore credible reporting or normalize corruption.

Vote for candidates committed to ethics and transparency. Demand accountability from every administration, regardless of party. Support investigative journalism that follows the money. Pressure Congress to conduct real oversight. Hold media organizations accountable when they ignore credible reporting or normalize corruption.

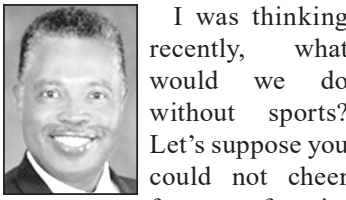
History teaches that corruption survives only as long as citizens tolerate it.

America’s 250-plus years have included extraordinary achievements and profound injustices. If citizens believe government is being used for private enrichment instead of public service, the responsibility ultimately falls on “We the People” to decide whether enough is enough.

(Based on reporting by Houston Defender)

Everybody is talking about youth sports these days

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



I was thinking recently, what would we do without sports? Let’s suppose you could not cheer for your favorite team? What if you could not play on your high school varsity team? Lastly, what if you could not earn a college scholarship to pay for your education?

Those are dismal scenarios and thankfully we do not have to endure them. We don’t have to make plans without sports. They are here to stay. Sports have evolved into a billion-dollar industry. At any time, day or night, you can turn on the television and watch a sporting event. It has become increasingly segmented. For example, if you only want to see baseball there is a baseball channel. If you want to watch tennis then there is a channel for that, too.

There are many beneficiaries of sports. Coaches get to provide instruction to young boys and girls. I was a high school and college coach. Those were special times in my life and I will never forget them. To be called coach makes you feel proud to be in that fraternity. Now, youth sports are taking over the athletic landscape. They have come in like a whirlwind and it has only just begun. Parents and love providers are giving young children the support and en-

couragement that they need. Taking them to practice and attending their games can’t be overstated. Kids look for their parents and supporters in the stands. How do children become interested in sports? That question has a few answers. I believe it is through parents and kids themselves. The more obvious answer is through parents as many were involved in sports at some level. However, if you lived in a neighborhood with children,

they kind of influenced you to try a particular sport. That is my opinion. According to reports, “Approximately 27 million children (ages 6-17) in the United States regularly participate in organized sports teams or lessons. This equates to roughly 58% of American youth.” The top sports, in my opinion, for youth participation are basketball and football. I think individual sports like golf, swimming and tennis are gaining traction as well. The

recent success of America in The World Cup is making soccer a go-to sport, too. The Aspen Institute’s Project Play research says, “American parents now spend more than \$40 billion annually on their children’s sports activities, with average spending on a child’s primary sport hitting \$1,016.00 in 2024, a 46% increase since 2019 running at twice the rate of inflation during the same period.” Let’s note that is an expense for one sport.

You are already paying for the AI Boom

Some states made data centers pay their own way. Others handed the bill to you. Virginia settled this question in 1882.

By Ben Jealous
People For the American Way



Pull up your electric bill. Somewhere in that number, you are paying for a building you will never enter. Data centers are going up everywhere. They need enormous amounts of electricity. Somebody must pay to connect them and build the plants and lines they need. In state after state, that somebody is you. Not everywhere. Texas requires the largest new power users to pay more of their connection costs and cut demand when the grid is strained. The data centers came anyway. Ohio now makes large new customers pay for much of the electricity they reserve, whether they use it or not. Projections for new demand then fell sharply. Much of the emergency was companies holding space they might never fill. Virginia chose differently. It gives data centers a tax break on their equipment. Good Jobs First estimates that subsidy cost Virginia schools \$267 million in one year. Illinois lawmakers let a similar bill die without a vote. Neither list sorts cleanly by party. Before you file this as a new problem, meet my great-great-grandfather. Edward David Bland was born into slavery in Dinwiddie County, Virginia, in 1848. Thirty-one years later, he was helping write that state’s laws. He served three terms in the House of Delegates and sat on the Committee on Schools and Colleges. That was not a coincidence. That was the point. Virginia was fighting over debt borrowed before the Civil War for canals and railroads. With interest, it had passed

\$45 million. One side said pay every penny, whatever it took. They were called the Funders. Here is what it was taking. Virginia was starving its public schools to pay bondholders. The bondholders lived in New York and London. The children lived in Petersburg and Danville. The other side said the debt would be paid, but not out of the schoolhouse. They were the Readjusters. Black and white together. Farmers, freedmen and a former Confederate general named William Mahone. A man born into slavery and a man who wore gray were counting the same votes on one floor. They ran Virginia for four years. In 1882, they cut the state’s share of the debt by roughly a third and refinanced the rest over 50 years. Then they spent the difference. They put money back into public schools. They funded schools with Black teachers. They repealed the poll tax. They tore down the whipping post. The Readjusters knew something we forgot. Whoever profits should not get to send the bill to whoever cannot say no. I am not against data centers. This country cannot afford to fall behind in artificial intelligence, and the reasons are not all about money. I am against making working families subsidize the world’s richest companies. It does not always take a governor. A small town in Illinois capped a data center’s water use, with penalties if it went over. A town council did that. Now let me tell you how the Readjusters lost. That is the part we forget. They were not beaten on the debt. They won that argument. In October 1883, their oppo-

nents warned that Black residents of Danville had gained too much power. On November 3, market day, a street fight became a shooting. Five men died. Four were Black. For three days, armed white men walked the streets and kept Black Virginians from the polls. The election came that week. Democrats took both houses. They never took the schools back. The new legislature left the school money alone. It left the whipping post gone. It left the debt settled. They did not undo the policy. They undid the voters. In 1902, a new state constitution stripped most Black Virginians of the ballot for more than 60 years. They were not defeated by a better plan. They were defeated by a campaign that made white farmers fear Black farmers more than the men taking money from both. It is the cheapest trick in American politics, and it has never once been out of stock. The people paying for these deals live in Loudoun County and Memphis, in white towns in Iowa and Black neighborhoods in Atlanta, in union halls and farmhouses. They are already paying the same bill. They just have not been asked to fight it together. Somebody will work hard to make sure they never do. My great-great-grandfather learned his letters at a night school for freedmen after the war. He was 17. Then he sat on the committee that funded schools so other children would not wait. He knew exactly what a school was worth. Go find out what your state did. Then find out who let it happen. Ben Jealous is a professor of practice at the University of Pennsylvania and former president and CEO of the NAACP.

Don’t Be Too Quick to Judge

By Dr. Raymond Barranco
Dr. Raymond Barranco



In addition to being a merge-as-soon-as-possible guy, I’m also a return-the-buggy-no-matter-what guy (buggy = shopping cart for my non-Deep South brethren). Such an approach makes it easy to tell how many jerks were at Walmart before me – simply count the uncorralled buggies. That’s probably too harsh. I’m willing to knock “jerk” down to “lazy” if they at least left it at the Four Corners – the spot where four parking spaces meet and where buggy placement causes the least amount of inconvenience for people trying to park. Jerk, lazy, rude, inconsiderate – these are my immediate reactions to seeing a free-range buggy. But if I’m being particularly mindful that day, I’ll stop and make myself imagine a scenario that would cause someone to leave the buggy where I wouldn’t. Maybe they were elderly or injured and needed it for support, so they left it near their car door. Maybe their child was having a full-scale meltdown and they just wanted to get out of Dodge as quickly as possible. Emergency phone call? Medical issue? Family crisis? I’m sure you can imagine others. The interesting thing is that once I imagine those possibilities, my feelings begin to

change. I no longer see a rude or inconsiderate person. I see someone dealing with circumstances I know nothing about. Such moments never cease to amaze me. They make me realize that I don’t necessarily have a problem with WHAT someone does – it’s more about WHY they did it. I suspect many other people are exactly the same way. The problem is that we rarely know why someone does anything. We only know what they did. So, we fill in the blanks ourselves. Unfortunately, we often fill them in with the least charitable explanation possible. That’s usually not how we treat our own behavior. When we’re the ones doing something others might shake their heads at, we have reasons. We were running late. We didn’t feel well. We were distracted. It was raining. We had a bad day. We were dealing with something nobody else could see. I’m not saying those explanations are wrong. In fact, they may be perfectly valid. What I’m saying is that the people whose behavior we are judging would probably offer explanations of their own. The funny thing is that we already know this. Most of us don’t want to be judged by our worst moment. We want people to understand the circumstances. We want them to know the context. We want them to realize that one action does not tell our whole story. Yet we often deny other people the same courtesy.

So what are we supposed to do? Hunt down the person who abandoned the buggy and demand an explanation? Catch up to the driver who cut us off and ask what’s going on in their life? No – please don’t do that. What we can do is make a conscious effort to give people the benefit of the doubt. We can remind ourselves that there is usually more to the story than we can see. Does that mean everyone is a good person who always has a good reason for doing what they do? Of course not. Some people really are careless, and some excuses really don’t hold up. Giving someone the benefit of the doubt is a starting assumption, not a guarantee – and it costs us nothing to extend it first. But I don’t think carelessness describes most people. Most are simply trying to navigate life the best they can, just like the rest of us. So, the next time you spot a buggy abandoned in the middle of a parking space or get cut off by someone who didn’t bother to signal, try running the experiment I run. Imagine the version of their day that would make their behavior make sense. You may be wrong. But you’ll probably be a little less angry, a little less judgmental, and a little more human for having tried. Dr. Raymond Barranco is a sociology professor in Mississippi whose writing focuses on public life, compassion, fairness, and how people think across differences. He can be reached at rbarranco@soc.ms-state.edu.

The Mississippi Link™

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NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**Workforce Training & Contractor Development Services
GreenWorks Clean Energy Jobs Training
C2: Connect & Compete - Unlocking Opportunities for Contractors
City of Jackson, Mississippi
RFP No. 92416-082526**

Notice is hereby given that the City of Jackson, Mississippi, acting through its Department of Planning & Development, will receive proposals from qualified organizations to provide workforce training, technical assistance, contractor development, and participant support services under two related City initiatives: Track 1 - GreenWorks: Clean Energy and Resilience Jobs Training Program; and Track 2 - C2: Connect & Compete - Unlocking Opportunities for Contractors.

Track 1 will provide clean-energy and resilience workforce training for forty (40) participants across four (4) cohorts of ten (10) participants each. Services include HVAC and/or electrical core training, technical microcertifications, OSHA 10, ACT WorkKeys, life-skills instruction, a specialized GreenWorks Bootcamp, field-based training, and preparation for a national certification examination.

Track 2 will provide contractor-development services for seventy-five (75) participants across five (5) cohorts of fifteen (15) participants each. The RFP is divided into five Lots: (1) Licensure & Certification Support; (2) Business Development Training; (3) Financial Readiness & Ownership Pathways; (4) Life & Durable Skills; and (5) Market Access & Mentorship. Proposers may respond to one or more Lots and are not required to propose for both Tracks.

Proposals shall be submitted electronically through the City of Jackson's official procurement portal at www.jacksonmsbids.com no later than 3:30 P.M. on August 25, 2026. Each submission must comply with the format, technical, cost, certification, reference, and service-requirement provisions contained in the RFP. Late proposals will not be accepted.

A virtual pre-proposal conference is scheduled for August 13, 2026, at 10:00 A.M. Attendance is strongly encouraged. Conference access information and any updates will be posted through the City's procurement portal.

Written questions must be submitted no later than 10:00 A.M. on August 11, 2026, to thoover@city.jackson.ms.us with the subject line "92416-082526 Question." Official responses, clarifications, and changes will be issued only by written addendum posted on the City's procurement portal.

This procurement is anticipated to be funded in whole or in part through workforce-development grant sources and the National League of Cities State and Local Certified Economic Inclusion initiative. Funding is subject to final grant award and City Council appropriation. Applicable grant requirements, including 2 CFR Part 200 where federal pass-through funds are involved, may apply.

The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive informalities or irregularities, request clarifications, conduct interviews, award individual Lots to different proposers, decline to award one or more Lots, cancel or reissue the RFP, and proceed in the manner deemed to be in the City's best interest and consistent with applicable law. Minority- and women-owned business enterprises are strongly encouraged to participate.

CITY OF JACKSON
Monica Oliver, Purchasing Manager

7/30/2026, 8/6/2026

LEGAL

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

NOTICE is hereby given that the City Council of the City of Jackson will receive unpriced proposals for prequalification until 10:00 AM on August 18, 2026, for furnishing the City of Jackson's requirements for the following:

IT INFRASTRUCTURE & NETWORK MODERNIZATION

Copies of the Bid Package are available for free download at www.jacksonmsbids.com. Documents must be downloaded through the website to be on the official plan holders list. For questions regarding website accessibility or obtaining bid documents, please contact PH Bidding Group at 662-407-0195 or via email at bids@phbidding.com.

Unpriced proposals shall be submitted through the bid site. Responses will be reviewed and vendors meeting the requirements in the bid package will be invited to participate in the online reverse auction, which will be held on August 25, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. Pricing will only be received by approved bidders through the online reverse auction.

Bid preparation will be in accordance with the Instructions to Bidders bound in the Documents. The City of Jackson reserves the right to waive irregularities and to reject any and/or all bids.

Minority and women's business enterprises are solicited to bid on this contract as prime bidders and are encouraged to make inquiries regarding potential subcontracting opportunities and equipment, material, and/or supply needs.

Any contract or contracts awarded under this invitation for bids are expected to be funded in whole by the City of Jackson. This procurement will be subject to the provisions of Section 31-7-13 of the Mississippi Code of 1972.

CITY OF JACKSON
Monica Oliver, Purchasing Manager

7/30/2026, 8/6/2026

LEGAL

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

LEGAL NOTICE
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Lease Purchase Financing Interest Rate Proposal
RFP#94654-081826

Notice is hereby given that sealed proposals will be received by the City of Jackson, Mississippi on August 18, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. at City Hall, 219 South President Street. Proposals will be received for lease purchase interest rate financing for the purchase of, vehicles and equipment.

Request for proposal documents can be downloaded from the City of Jackson bid website at www.jacksonmsbids.com.

Please submit two (2) copies of sealed proposals, marked: "RFP#94654-081826 Lease Purchase Financing Interest Rate Proposal." Proposals should be mailed to the following address prior to or on August 18, 2026.

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

Electronic Bids may be submitted in lieu of sealed bids at the following site: www.jacksonmsbids.com.

Questions regarding the bid shall be directed to the City of Jackson, Mississippi as follows:

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

7/30/2026, 8/6/2026

LEGAL

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

IN THE MATTER OF WILLIAM WILSON, DECEASED CAUSE NO. P2026-153 T/1
PETITIONER: ANN JAMES

SUMMONS

THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
TO: THE UNKNOWN HEIRS OF WILLIAM WILSON, DECEASED

You have been made a Defendant in the suit filed in this Court by Ann James Petitioner, seeking the adjudication of heirs of William Wilson, Deceased.

You are summoned to appear and defend against the complaint or petition filed against you in this action at 9:00 a.m. o'clock, on the 13th day of August, 2026, in the Chancery Courtroom of Hinds County before Honorable DeWayne Thomas, Chancellor. In case of your failure to appear and defend a judgment will be entered against you for the money or other things demanded in the complaint or petition.

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

Issued under my hand and the seal of said Court, this the ____ day of June, 2026.

EDDIE JEAN CARR
CHANCERY CLERK OF HINDS COUNTY,
MISSISSIPPI

7/16/2026, 7/23/2026, 7/30/2026

LEGAL

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The City of Jackson is seeking bids from responsible firms to provide Third Party Administration for the City of Jackson Medical, Dental and Vision Benefit Plans. Sealed bids will be received by the City Clerk of Jackson, Mississippi at 219 S. President Street Jackson, MS 39201 or at Post Office Box 17, Jackson, Mississippi 39205 until 3:30 PM, local time (CT), Tuesday September 1, 2026 at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud for:

To provide Third Party Administration for the City of Jackson Medical, Dental and Vision Benefit Plans. Anticipated date of change is January 1, 2027.

Electronic Proposals MUST be submitted at www.jacksonmsbids.com. For any questions related to the electronic bidding process, contact PH Bidding at admin@phbidding.com or call 662-407-0193.

Proposals are to be in a sealed envelope plainly marked on the outside. "Bid to Provide Third Party Administration of Jackson's Health, Dental and Vision Benefit Plans."

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

Bid preparation will be in accordance with the Instructions to Bidders.

A mandatory pre-bid conference will be held at 1:00 p.m., on Monday, August 17, 2026 at 633 North State Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39205, 3rd floor. Responders may participate in-person or remotely. All questions regarding the request for proposal, must be submitted in writing by August 14, 2026 by 12:00 noon. Questions must be emailed to Toya Martin, Director of Human Resources, at tmartin@jacksonms.gov. All questions and responses will be read and answered during the pre-bid conference.

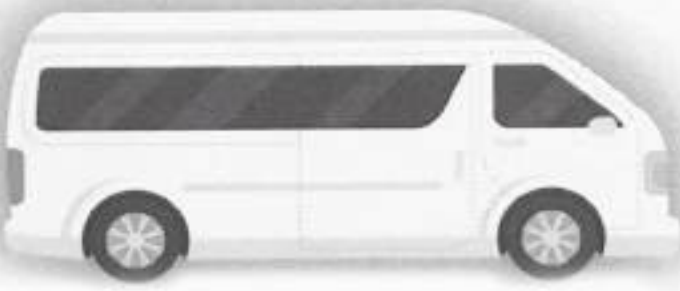
The City reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any and all irregularities in respect to any bid submitted or to accept any bid which is deemed most favorable to the City of Jackson.

Sincerely,

7/30/2026, 8/6/2026

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DOLLAR GENERAL

2030 N Siwell Rd

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4331 Highway 80W

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5990 Medgar Evers Blvd

DOLLAR GENERAL

1214 Capitol St (Downtown Jackson)

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2855 McDowell Rd

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P R E S E R V E D

Do Your Part: Pour Into Other

By Shewanda Riley
Columnist



“Stressed.” That’s what my lawn fertilizer company technician said when he looked at the yellow-brownish grass in my front yard. Concerned and worried that my once green yard was ruined for the rest of the year, I asked him what, if anything, could be done to get it back to green.

His suggestions were to increase how many times a week I watered it and to water it in the evenings. He added that my lawn was just like so many they’d seen over the last few weeks. That last part made me feel a little better that I wasn’t alone in my battle to save my lawn.

In addition, his words made me think about what I saw a few weeks ago when I was flying home from a trip. I looked out of the airplane window, as

I like to do, as we got closer to the Dallas Fort Worth Airport.

Instead of seeing the normal bright green fields, I saw brown: Brown fields and lawns. This summer is becoming brutal with excessive heat. It’s 85 degrees at 7 am, 100 degrees by noon and feeling like 110 degrees by 5 pm. It’s not good for pets, humans or for our grass.

Another friend suggested that I water my grass more than twice a week and for longer periods of time. He said that if I do that, I should see a return to my green grass in a couple of weeks.

So, between his advice and the fertilizing tech, one thing stood out to me: It’s not just about how often I water but for how long. He explained that the water has to go deeper to nourish trees and grass when it’s hotter outside. Because of the heat, it evaporates quickly.

I’ve been doing what they suggested and seen some encouraging results. I see a few

specks of green in the midst of the yellow-brown patches. And in some spots, the green patches are maintaining their color and expanding. Yay for my grass but it probably won’t be good for my water bill!

Now that it looks like my plan to re-green my grass is working somewhat, I’m thinking about those many scriptures that talk about the importance of watering.

One of my favorites is I Corinthians 1:6-7 “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So, neither he who plants, nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”

Now I see that scripture completely differently. Talking to people isn’t enough. We have to go deeper in our connection with others. Just like watering on a surface level isn’t enough, we have to show empathy and go beyond the surface level in our relationships with others.

It’s hard being patient but

there is a blessing that comes from seeing something after we’ve taken time to nurture it by watering and seeing it grow. It is especially rewarding when we see something that looks like it is dying come back to life stronger and more vibrant than it was before.

As I continue to water it intentionally and deeply, I’m looking forward to seeing my lawn transform back to green. Likewise, when we choose to pour into others, we have the awesome opportunity to see true transformation when we get out of the way and allow God to do His perfecting work.

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

Mount Zion MBC, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Partner to Bring 29,000 Meals to Alameda County



Pastor Michael Wallace of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church (center) and David Kimball, president of the Oakland Stake of the LDS church listen to remarks before volunteers began their work. COURTESY PHOTO.

Special to The Post Oakland Post

The interfaith community effort commemorates the 250th anniversary of the U.S.

More than 29,000 meals were received and distributed at the historic Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in West Oakland as part of an interfaith community effort to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the United States.

The Alameda County Community Food Bank (ACCFB), Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church (MZMBC), and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) partnered to address food insecurity throughout Alameda County.

A semi-truckload of food arrived at MZMBC in Oakland on Tuesday, July 21. This was one of 250 trucks the LDS church is sending throughout the United States. By the end of the year 10 million pounds of food will be donated. Each truck carries approximately 40,000 pounds of shelf-stable pantry staples that can feed 1,400 families for one week.

Pastor Michael Wallace of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church provides instruction as volunteers unpack pallets of food to be distributed. “We believe that having food is a basic human right and to address it is our Christian duty,” Wallace said. “That’s what makes this partnership so meaningful.”

The need for food is significant. According to the ACCFB, 1 in 4 members of the community they serve is experiencing or at risk of hunger.

“The challenges get much harder during the summer when children no longer have access to healthy meals at school,” says Regi Young, executive director of Alameda County Community Food Bank.

“Our community and our food bank face similar challenges accessing some of the highest quality and high demand foods because they are typically also the most expensive.

Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee speaks at the JustServe event. “Fresh milk is among the top items on these lists, so we are extremely grateful for this donation to help more families stretch their budgets and get through these challenging summer months,” Lee said.

Two days later, on July 23, another semi-truck, this one bearing fresh milk from the LDS church, arrived at the ACCFB. Event organizers share a commitment to caring for those in need and fostering meaningful service connections within communities.

“After 250 years, there is still food insecurity in America, and

this is an interfaith community effort to eradicate hunger in our communities and cities,” said Pastor Michael Wallace of Mount Zion. “We believe that having food is a basic human right and to address it is our Christian duty. That’s what makes this partnership so meaningful.”

“Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe in following the Savior’s commandments to love God and to love our neighbor,” says David Kimball, president of the Oakland Stake of the LDS church. “We are grateful to partner with these organizations to help care for those in need in our community.”

Word Assembly First Lady Denise Clark, joined Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church First Lady Velma Wallace at the food distribution site, where the first of the 250 truckloads of food LDS will provide to places across the country was distributed.

Welcoming the truck’s arrival at 10 a.m. at MZMBC were Kimball, Young, Wallace of MZMBC, and civil rights activist and Post News Group Publisher Paul Cobb.

Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee was again in attendance and addressed the hundreds of volunteers. Inspiring music was provided by members of the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir under the leadership of Terrance Kelly. Teens from both churches were on hand to assist with loading food items for various local nonprofits and community groups to distribute to those in need.

The teens also assembled 1,000 hygiene kits for the unhoused. Each kit will include a note of encouragement written by the children and youth of each church. The churches and organizations that received food include:

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church

ECAP (Emeryville Citizens Assistance Program)

Support Life Foundation/Islamic Cultural Center of Northern California (ICCNC)

Serenity House
CRECE (Central American Refugee Committee)

ION (Impact Oakland Now - Word Assembly, Center of Hope and Abyssinian Baptist Church)

True Faith Baptist Church (East Oakland)

“These two large shipments of food and milk, along with this interfaith, community event, exemplify the spirit of volunteerism and community service that this country was built on,” says Gregg Ankenman, assistant director of Community Service for the Oakland/San Francisco Communication Council of the LDS Church.



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Understanding Osteoarthritis: A common condition with real solutions

By Vince Faust MA
Health Educator
and Motivational Writer

Osteoarthritis is one of the most common health conditions in the world, yet many people don't fully understand what it is or why it happens. Doctors often describe it as a "wearandtear" disease, but that simple phrase doesn't tell the whole story. Osteoarthritis affects millions of people, including many right here in Jackson, and it can change how someone moves, works and enjoys daily life. Even so, treatments today are better than ever and people with osteoarthritis have many ways to stay active and manage their symptoms.

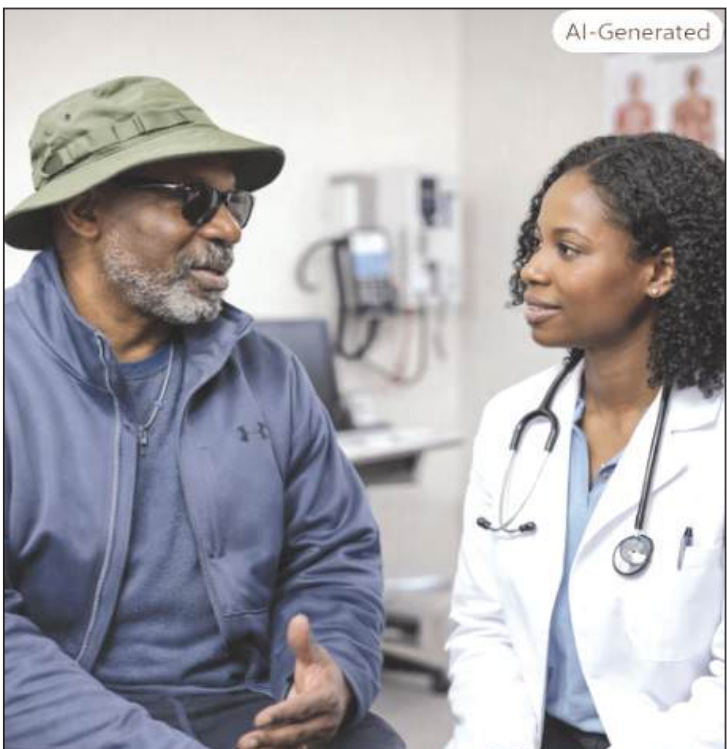
Osteoarthritis is a disease that affects the joints, the places where bones meet and move. Healthy joints have a smooth, rubbery material called cartilage that covers the ends of the bones. Cartilage works like a cushion. It lets bones glide over each other without grinding. It also absorbs shock when you walk, run or lift things.

In osteoarthritis, this cartilage slowly breaks down. As it wears away, the bones begin to rub against each other. This rubbing can cause pain, swelling, stiffness and sometimes a grinding feeling. Over time, the joint can lose its normal shape. Small bony growths called bone spurs may form and the joint may become harder to move.

Osteoarthritis can happen in any joint, but it most often affects:

- Knees
- Hips
- Hands and fingers
- Spine (especially the lower back and neck)

People usually notice symptoms gradually. At first, the joint may feel stiff in the morning or



sore after a long day. Later, the pain may become more constant and everyday activities, like climbing stairs or opening jars can become harder.

There isn't just one cause. Instead, several factors can increase the chances of developing osteoarthritis:

- Age: The risk goes up as people get older. Cartilage naturally becomes thinner over time.
- Previous injuries: A bad fall, a torn ligament or a broken bone can damage a joint and lead to osteoarthritis years later.
- Genetics: Some people inherit traits that make their cartilage weaker or their joints more likely to wear down.
- Weight: Extra body weight puts more pressure on joints, especially the knees and hips.
- Repetitive movements: Jobs or sports that involve repeated bending, lifting or twisting could stress the joints.

Even though these factors raise the risk, osteoarthritis is

not guaranteed. Many people with risk factors never develop the disease and others get it without any clear reason.

Doctors usually start by asking about symptoms: When does the pain happen? What makes it better or worse? They also examine the joint to check for swelling, tenderness or limited movement.

Sometimes doctors order Xrays to see how much cartilage has worn away or whether bone spurs have formed. In some cases, they may use MRI scans to get a closer look at the joint. Blood tests are not used to diagnose osteoarthritis, but they can help rule out other conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis.

There is no cure for osteoarthritis yet, but there are many effective treatments. The goal is to reduce pain, improve movement and help people stay active. Treatment plans often combine several approaches.

Doctors often start with

simple changes that can reduce stress on the joints and improve overall health.

Exercise
It may seem strange to move more when your joints hurt, but exercise is one of the best treatments for osteoarthritis. It strengthens the muscles around the joints, improves flexibility and reduces stiffness.

Helpful activities include:

- Walking
- Swimming
- Biking
- Gentle stretching
- Strength training with light weights or resistance bands

Even 20–30 minutes a day can make a noticeable difference.

Weight Management
For people who are overweight, losing even a small amount, 5 to 10 percent of body-fat weight can reduce pressure on the joints and ease pain. Doctors often say that every pound lost takes about four pounds of pressure off the knees.

Heat and Cold Therapy
Warm showers, heating pads or warm towels can relax stiff joints. Ice packs can reduce swelling and numb sharp pain. Many people use both depending on the situation.

Joint Protection
Simple changes in daily habits can help:

- Using both hands to lift heavy objects
- Choosing shoes with good support
- Avoiding long periods of standing or sitting
- Using braces or supports when needed

Several types of medicines can help reduce pain and swelling.

Pain Relievers: Over-the-counter options like acetaminophen can help mild pain. For stronger pain, doctors may pre-

scribe other medications.

AntiInflammatory Drugs: Nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen or naproxen, reduce both pain and swelling. They are widely used but can cause side effects if taken too often, so doctors help patients use them safely.

Topical Treatments: Creams, gels and patches that contain painrelieving medicine can be rubbed directly onto the skin over the joint. These are helpful for people who cannot take oral medications.

Injections: For more severe pain, doctors may inject medicine directly into the joint. Two common types are:

- Corticosteroid injections, which reduce inflammation
- Hyaluronic acid injections, which help lubricate the joint

These injections can provide relief for weeks or months, though they are not permanent solutions.

Physical Therapy and Assistive Devices: Physical therapists teach exercises that improve strength, balance and flexibility. They also show people how to move in ways that protect the joints. Assistive devices can also help:

- Canes
- Walkers
- Shoe inserts
- Knee braces
- Special grips for opening jars or holding tools

These tools make daily tasks easier and reduce strain on painful joints.

Surgery – A Last Resort, But Often Effective:

When other treatments no longer help, surgery may be an option. The most common surgery for severe osteoarthritis is joint replacement. In this procedure, doctors remove the damaged

joint and replace it with an artificial one made of metal, plastic or ceramic.

Knee and hip replacements are very successful. Most people experience major pain relief and improved movement. Recovery takes time, usually several weeks, months or years but the results can be lifechanging.

Other surgeries include: Joint resurfacing, which replaces only part of the joint; arthroscopy, which uses small tools to clean out damaged tissue; osteotomy, which reshapes bones to reduce pressure on the joint

Surgery is not right for everyone, but for many people it provides longterm relief.

Osteoarthritis can be frustrating, especially when it limits activities you enjoy. But many people continue to live active, fulfilling lives with the condition. The key is finding the right combination of treatments and making healthy choices every day.

Doctors encourage patients to stay positive and stay involved in their care. Learning about the disease helps people make better decisions. Support from family, friends and community groups also makes a big difference.

New treatments are being studied all the time, including medicines that may slow cartilage breakdown and therapies that help the body repair damaged joints. While these are still being tested, they offer hope for the future.

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, email to tipstobefit@gmail.com Catch “Tips to be Fit” on “Good Day Good Health” everyday.

Why Stigma is Still One of the Biggest Barriers to Addiction Recovery

By Arin Barry
BlackPressUSA.com Writer

Stigma is still one of the biggest barriers to addiction recovery because it shapes how people see addiction, how individuals feel about themselves, and whether they feel safe enough to ask for help.

When shame and judgment take over, many people delay or avoid treatment, even when they need it most.

In the United States, 48.5 million people aged 12 and above were living with a substance use disorder (SUD) in 2023, but only 24% received treatment, according to a study published in Drug and Alcohol Dependence Reports. Stigma is one of the most commonly reported reasons people avoid treatment.

Stigma makes recovery harder for many people, but for Black Americans, it can be compounded by broader social and healthcare inequities. Together, these factors can influence access to care, treatment experiences, and recovery outcomes.

Addiction is a clinical condition that affects brain function and behavior. Yet, society often views it as a moral flaw. To help, we must understand the impact of stigma on recovery and how to change it.

Where Does Addiction Stigma Come From?

In the past, many people viewed addiction as a sign of weak character rather than a health condition. As a result, people were often punished or judged rather than offered medical care.

Addiction stigma refers to stereotypes, negative attitudes, and discrimination directed at people living with substance use disorders. It often shows up in words like “addict,” “junkie,” or “user,” terms that reduce a person to their worst moment in



PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO /NNPA.

stead of recognizing them as someone dealing with a medical illness.

Today, addiction is recognized as a chronic, relapsing medical condition. It involves changes in brain circuits connected to:

- Self-control
- Reward
- Stress

Although this is widely accepted in healthcare and research, public attitudes are still influenced by the earlier moral judgments.

Media coverage also plays a role. A 2024 scoping review in The Annals of Family Medicine reported that mass media continues to reinforce negative stereotypes of those with substance use disorders, which may hinder treatment efforts.

Stigma around substance use varies across societies and cultures in how it is expressed and understood. In some communities, substance use may be associated with strong family shame or social judgment. In others, it may be less openly discussed until it becomes more severe.

How Stigma Affects Recovery
When society judges addiction,

people often internalize that judgment. They start to believe the negative labels they hear and, over time, may come to feel worthless or undeserving of help. This internal shame is powerful. It silences people and leaves them isolated.

Fear of rejection from friends, family, or employers is another major deterrent, and these fears are often justified. People with addiction do face ostracism; they lose relationships and opportunities. Healthcare settings are not immune to stigma either. Patients sometimes encounter impatience, dismissive attitudes, or judgment from doctors and nurses.

Experiencing this kind of treatment makes people far less likely to seek care again. It reinforces the fear that they are not worthy of quality medical attention.

Breaking Stigma Barriers: How Do We Change the Narrative?

Effective addiction stigma solutions start with how we talk about and understand addiction. Education is key, and public campaigns that frame addiction as a health condition, backed by science rather than myths, can shift

the narrative and build awareness.

Another solution is encouraging open dialogue in schools, workplaces, and communities. Talking about addiction as a health issue reduces secrecy and shame.

The language we use also matters. Referring to someone as “a person with a substance use disorder” keeps the focus on the individual, not the condition. While it may seem like a small change, person-first language can help reduce stigma and promote compassion.

Sharing lived experiences is perhaps one of the most effective ways to build empathy. When people in recovery tell their stories, they humanize addiction and show that recovery is achievable. These stories break down stereotypes and help the public see beyond harmful labels.

Many organizations create platforms for this kind of storytelling, giving recovery a face and a voice. Access to treatment plays a key role in recovery. Research suggests that Black Americans may face additional challenges when trying to access addiction treatment.

These challenges may include systemic barriers within the healthcare system and experiences of racial bias.

Expanding access to compassionate, culturally responsive, judgment-free care can improve treatment engagement from the start. Learn more about available options to overcome drug addiction here.

Supportive policies that reduce discrimination against people with substance use disorders can also help to:

- Remove barriers to care
- Improve long-term stability
- Promote fair treatment for everyone

Frequently Asked Questions
What Role Does Gender Play in How Stigma Affects Recovery?

Social expectations define women as caregivers and nurturers, so addiction is often viewed as failing those roles. Men may experience pressure tied to traditional expectations of strength and self-reliance.

However, stigma is universal in addiction recovery, and it affects people in different ways depending on:

- Type of substance used
- The social context
- The individual situation

How Does Stigma Affect Long-Term Recovery Outcomes?

Stigma can make recovery harder to sustain. It can lead to stress, isolation, and a lack of support, all of which increase the risk of relapse.

People tend to do better when they feel understood and treated with respect throughout their recovery journey.

What Should Someone Do if They Experience Stigma While Seeking Treatment?

This reaction may reflect gaps in provider training rather than a flaw in the person seeking help. Consider requesting a different provider or seeking care from a clinic that specializes in substance use treatment.

Bringing a trusted friend or family member to appointments can also provide support and advocacy. One difficult experience doesn't mean treatment isn't worth pursuing.

Better care is available.

Building a Stigma-Free Future

Overcoming addiction stigma is a shared responsibility. When we remove the shame, we open doors, create space for healing and growth, and build a future where recovery becomes the expected outcome, not the exception.

The promise of hope is within our reach if we are willing to break the silence together.

Jackson Public Schools celebrate Back-to-School season with Georgetown Parade

By Othor Cain
Contributing Writer/Community Co-ordinator, Elementary Schools JPS

The Jackson Public Schools District kicked off the new school year with a celebration of community, partnership, and school pride during the Georgetown Back-to-School Parade, an event that brought together families, educators, community leaders, and local organizations in support of student success.

Hosted by the Community Schools in the Lanier High School Feeder Pattern in partnership with Ward 3 Councilman Kenneth Stokes, the parade traveled through the Georgetown community before concluding at the H.E.A.L. Mississippi offices. The event served as more than a festive celebration, it was a one-stop opportunity for families to prepare for the upcoming school year.

Following the parade, students and families received free dental and vision health screenings, complimentary haircuts, school uniforms, food, and access to valuable community resources. The atmosphere was filled with

excitement, fellowship, and a shared commitment to ensuring every child begins the school year ready to learn.

A special highlight of the event was the support of Dr. Fred Kency of Kency Medical Services. Through his fundraising efforts, school uniforms were purchased and distributed to students onsite. His generosity also helped provide enough additional uniforms to stock resource closets throughout the Community Schools, ensuring that students will continue to have access to essential clothing throughout the school year.

Community support extended even further through the efforts of Ryan Portis and the Jackson Alumni Chapter of Kappa Kappa Psi, who provided free haircuts for students. Jerome Carter of Kappa Kappa Psi and BankPlus kept families well-fed as the master of the grill, with BankPlus serving as a proud event sponsor.

Entertainment was provided by Randy “Wildman” Brown of WMPR, whose live music added energy and excitement to the celebration and kept families entertained throughout the day.

The Community Schools represented in the Lanier High School Feeder Pattern include Galloway Elementary School, Johnson Elementary School, Walton Elementary School, Brinkley Middle School, and Lanier Junior/Senior High School. Each school was well represented during the parade, with several principals proudly participating alongside students, staff, families, and community partners.

The Georgetown Back-to-School Parade demonstrated the power of collaboration between Jackson Public Schools, community organizations, elected officials, businesses, and dedicated volunteers. Together, these partnerships are helping remove barriers to learning while creating opportunities for students to thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

As the new school year begins, the event served as a reminder that when schools and communities work together, students benefit the most. Judging by the smiles, laughter, and overwhelming community spirit on display, fun was truly had by all.



PHOTOS BY ROSALINE MCCOY/COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COORDINATOR LANIER JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL





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Second Annual Back2Skool Event at JPD Training Academy Draws Hundreds & Sparks Excitement

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

The Jayne Avenue Neighborhood Association, the office of Representative Zakiya Summers (Mississippi House of Representatives, District 68) and The Brown Place Group Home, Inc. hosted the 2nd Annual Back2Skool event on Sunday at JPD Training Academy of this week, from 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m.

Hundreds of parents and their children dominated the scene, as they listened to live music, approached vendors, collected school supplies, collected literature, posed for caricatures and learned the value of parental guidance. Children also were treated with barber and hairstyling makeovers.

This community event set the pace for children to begin the 2026-2027 academic school year.

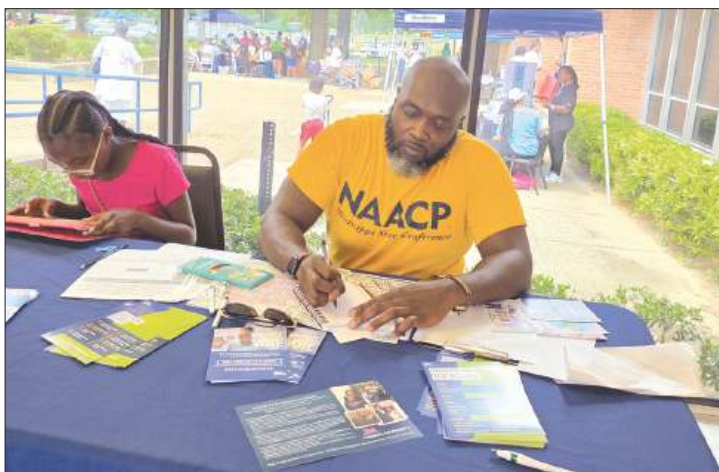
"Our Back2Skool event was designed to ensure our children have what they need to begin the school year equipped to learn," voiced Representative Summers. "It's up to us to take care of our children and appreciate the community for supporting us. The Brown Place, Jayne Avenue Neighborhood Association and our partners provided supplies for more than 300 children as well as haircuts, braiding and other resources."

Among a number of essential activities held inside the JPD Training Academy was "Walk the Black Line." This entailed choices. One child at a time was blindfolded and walked down a narrow path that led to her/his parent who was waiting. The objective was for parents to be responsible and accountable for guiding their children down the straight and narrow way.

Regarding the activity, one mother remarked, "I tell them (her children) about listening because in the community, people will lead you in the wrong way. And there's a lot of peer pressure. [That is why we] must try to tell them to follow directions."

Various professionals and community representatives made themselves available to take care of the children. Dr. Latarsha Arrington, D.M.D. (Kincaid Dental Center) explained the significance of oral health.

"It's just as important as going to the dentist. A lot of kids miss school because of toothaches and other dental-related problems that



could have been prevented with early detection," Dr. Arrington explained. For that reason, oral health should not be taken lightly.

La'Sonya Edwards-Friday is a vision strategist/coach of Life Re-imagined (a personal and spiritual growth lifestyle brand personally dedicated to guiding and supporting individuals on their journey of self-discovery and purpose).

She referenced the Back2Skool gathering as intentionally connecting the youth to vision and purpose at an early age. "It's our responsibility," she contended, "to inspire, educate and empower them to courageously imagine a life of vision building."

NAACP representative Terry Wynn spoke of the large number of children who were on the scene. That, he stated, was highly significant. He also voiced that as a community member, "It is always great to collaborate and share information to help others."

Ameka Coleman, Founder of Strands of Faith, creates products to bring joy to textured hair. "Seeing the kids get their hair styled and cut was a beautiful sight to see. The way we build a better community is by coming together to support one another," said the founder.

Hair and beauty salon representatives rendered free hairstyles for the children. They expressed love for the community and welcomed the opportunity to be of service.

Barber Rob Arrington mentioned his gratitude for the opportunity to return this year. Student Cameron Tucker said that he was happy that the barber was cutting his hair and that he was excited to attend the Back2Skool gathering.

A number of hairstylists talked about the 12 noon to 3 p.m. function. Ikisha Taylor and Shaquera Brown were exuberant about the

turnout. Seeing people from different walks of life meet up to make a difference in the lives of the children was to them "a well-thought-of idea."

Ashley Jackson praised the founder for "Putting the occasion together." Acknowledging that she was a first-time participant, the reactor explained that there could be no better time than this past Sunday to have such an event that eased pressures of the economic/financial crisis that residents are experiencing.

Tanesha Jefferson fell in line with her remarks. Being "a community presence" was something that she did not take for granted. "I'm here doing what I love to do because there are many benefits," she said.

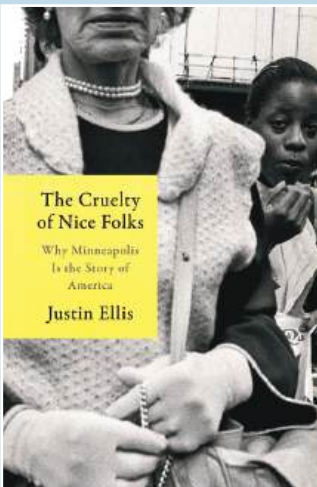
Just as Tucker gleaned his excitement for hair tidiness for school, so did other students. Kingston Parish (13) commented that she was looking forward to returning to school with a fresh hairstyle. "I thank God for allowing me to get my hair done by the stylist," stated another student, Lyric Allen.

Judge Tametrice Hodges commented, "As a proud co-sponsor of Back2Skool Time to Shine, I am very proud to watch/witness the great success of the event. This year's success is greater than last year's. As your Hinds County Chancery Court Judge, I am proud to stand with Brown Place Group Home, to help support the safety, security and stability of our children and families."

This second Back2Skool occurrence spawned schoolers in the right direction. They saw adults in positive spheres. They joined forces with caring adults — backers for their successes for the 2026-2027 academic school year.

What lies ahead will determine the number of milestones they will reach.





BOOK REVIEW: THE CRUELTY OF NICE FOLKS: WHY MINNEAPOLIS IS THE STORY OF AMERICA BY JUSTIN ELLIS C.2026, HARPER \$30.00 • 419 PAGES

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
Columnist

Two blocks up, two down.
Once upon a time, that was your entire world. You lived here, Grandma’s house was around the corner, uncles and aunts lived along the way, school was nearby, church across the street. That real estate held everything you needed. But what if things changed?
What if, as in the new memoir, “The Cruelty of Nice Folks” by Justin Ellis, your hometown, the place that held your memories, betrayed you?

Chances are that when you think of Minnesota, you think of lakes, lush fields, or fun in the snow. Justin Ellis thought of home because he grew up in Minneapolis, close to family and friends and everything he held dear.
He was, therefore, understandably alarmed when George Floyd was killed by a Minneapolis policeman who knelt on Floyd’s neck until he died. Ellis wondered how something like this could happen in the city he loved, and so he headed home.
Being a Black family in Min-

neapolis was never without its struggles. There, Ellis says, “only 26 percent of Black families own homes...” When unemployment for Black residents was at an all-time low, it was double what white Minneapolitans experienced.
And scattered throughout Ellis’s lifetime, Black citizen died at the hands of police.
He wanted to know why, with such a progressive reputation and a history of welcome for people of color, was there still racial violence in his hometown? Would Chauvin pay for Floyd’s murder?

Ellis says, “... our eyes had seen this death so many times before and watched a killer walk away. What were we supposed to believe?”
Arriving in Minneapolis, Ellis set out to see the whole picture that he and other Black Minneapolitans had lived, but his arrival there had dual purpose. Ellis’s mother had been diagnosed with cancer, and she needed him close.
As her life slipped away, he studied the death of a man he’d never know...
While you’ll probably pick up “The Cruelty of Nice Folks”

for its thoughtful content and the fact-finding inside, it’s important to at least give a nod to the books’ exquisite writing.
Author Justin Ellis sharpens a thought, turns a phrase, and screws it tightly into your heart in a way that most writers will only wish they could do, so pay attention and don’t miss it.
That’s the first appeal of this book.
The second appeal is in the story itself, and the reporting that Ellis offers. Readers who know all about “Minnesota Nice” but also about Floyd, Renee Good

and Alex Pretti will see the yin and yang of the Twin Cities, and why Minneapolis’s long history of race relations explains a lot of what’s going on in the rest of America.
That story is woven in with a memoir of a mother’s love that’ll make you want a big box of tissues. You’ve been warned.
This is a thoughtful, thorough book that will satisfy readers of history and biographies, making it a don’t-miss. Start “The Cruelty of Nice Folks” and you’ll find that you can’t put it down.



ZACK WALLACE
Hinds County Circuit Clerk



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Countdown to Nashville: T.C. Taylor Leads Jackson State Toward the 2026 Opener

By Tim Ward
Sports Writer

Let the countdown to Nashville begin!

JSU will open its 2026 football season on Saturday, August 29, against Tennessee State in the John A. Merritt Classic. Kickoff is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. at FirstBank Stadium on the campus of Vanderbilt University. The game was originally scheduled to be played at Nissan Stadium, the home of the Tennessee Titans, but the Titans have a preseason game to play that night.

For Jackson State, the trip to Nashville represents more than the start of another season. It will be the Tigers' first opportunity to establish their identity, set the tone and show how months of preparation will translate when the lights come on. Will also be the first chance to get that taste of losing the SWAC Championship game out of their mouths. Head Coach T.C. Taylor hasn't forgotten and won't let his tigers forget either.

Coach Taylor opened his remarks at SWAC Football Media Day in Birmingham the way you'd expect from a coach who hasn't slept great since December — by bringing up the loss. Jackson State fell 23-21 to Prairie View A&M in last year's SWAC Championship Game, one possession short of a trip to the Celebration Bowl, and Taylor made clear that number is still living rent-free in his head.

"We were right there last year," Taylor said. "Two points away from getting there last year. Winning a back-to-back SWAC title, and it's no different this year."



QB Jared Lockhart took over for Jacobian Morgan in Las Vegas last season



Coach TC Taylor

That's the mentality Jackson State walks into 2026 with, going 9-3, won the SWAC East, and still considers the season a near-miss. The Tigers enter as one of the conference's most talked-about teams again, this time with a full offseason built around replacing the pieces they lost to graduation and the trans-

fer portal.

A new man officially is the signal caller for JSU. Replacing Jacobian Morgan is Jared Lockhart, who stepped into the starting job in 2025 after Morgan went down with an injury. This year, he's the guy, full-time, and he was voted preseason 2nd Team All-SWAC for his trouble.



Jared Lockhart is the man this season

Lockhart credited Taylor for pushing him toward that role rather than just handing it to him. "He preaches on me being a leader. Things like getting my body healthy, knowing the plays, knowing the progressions," Lockhart said.

Taylor's message throughout Media Day was that the turn-

over at other spots on the roster hasn't shaken his confidence in the group he's built. "We felt like we did a great job of bringing in some guys to replace a lot of talent that we lost last year," Taylor said. "Those guys that we brought in have stepped in and they are really talented."

The season opener will also re-

new a historic rivalry. Tennessee State holds a 30-23-2 advantage in the all-time series, while Jackson State won the most recent meeting 16-3 in 2022. The August 29 matchup will be the first time Jackson State and Tennessee State have faced one another in the John A. Merritt Classic.

The game for years was played in Memphis as apart of the Southern Heritage Classic. The classic still continues, this year Alcorn State will play Arkansas Pine Bluff September 12th.

There have been some criticisms online about Jackson State's non-conference schedule. Several HBCU fans pushed back on the lack of FCS opponents outside the HBCU ranks. Coach T.C. Taylor wasn't entertaining it. Speaking on KC-1400 Media with Ken Clark, he made his priorities plain: nothing on the schedule matters more than what gets Jackson State back to Atlanta.

"All the opponents that are on there that matter for us to get to the Celebration Bowl, to win the East, to get to the SWAC Championship, they're on there," Taylor said. Coach Taylor went viral for a message he delivered to the football team his week. The video is posted on JSU's social media pages.

He stated it's 1 goal and they must be the standard. Coach Taylor said, "It's championship or nothing, but I guarantee you when teams pull up to play us they want it just as bad, because NOBODY has love for Jackson State. You are going to get their best". Opponents better expect Jackson State to bring their best too.

HINDS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT WEEKLY UPDATE

Welcome Back, Raymond High School Teachers & Staff

Today was a special day as Ranger Pride PTSO had the honor of welcoming our incredible teachers and staff back for the start of a new school year.

We are excited for all that this year will bring and look forward to supporting the amazing educators and staff who pour so much into our students each and every day.

Thank you for your dedication, passion, and commitment to making a difference. We are praying for a successful, rewarding, and unforgettable school year.

Here's to an amazing 2026-2027 school year. Go Rangers.





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