



**CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

# THE GRAMBLING ★ CONNECTION

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**DEI ROLLBACKS**

## Black Leadership's Response to DEI Rollbacks

Staff Report

Black leadership organizations have actively opposed President Donald Trump's recent executive orders aimed at dismantling diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives across federal agencies and contractors. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) has been at the forefront of this opposition. NAACP President Derrick Johnson condemned the rollback, stating, "It is outrageous that the President is rolling back critical Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs. DEI programs help ensure that everyone can prosper. It's clear that President Trump does not value equal opportunity."

In addition to public statements, legal actions have been initiated to challenge these executive orders. On February 4, 2025, the city of Baltimore, along with groups such as the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education and the American Association of University Professors, filed a lawsuit against President Trump and his administration. The lawsuit seeks to block and declare unconstitutional the executive orders that aim to end DEI programs, arguing that these orders exceed the president's authority and infringe upon congressional powers.

The suit named as defendants Trump, nine government departments and their corresponding cabinet officers, the National Science Foundation and the Office of Management and Budget.

Trump campaigned on ending programs that help women, ethnic minorities and LGBTQ people obtain government jobs and contracts, saying such practices unfairly punish more qualified applicants.

Civil rights and pro-equality groups argue the programs are necessary to correct discrimination in a country where women and African Americans did not achieve legal equality until the 20th century and continue to lag behind their white male counterparts in pay and opportunity.

"In his crusade to erase diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility from our country, President Trump cannot usurp Con-



Derrick Johnson, NAACP President

gress's exclusive power of the purse, nor can he silence those who disagree with him by threatening them with the loss of federal funds and other enforcement action," the lawsuit says.

Civil rights activists have also organized protests and called for boycotts against companies that have retreated from DEI commitments under political pressure. For instance, following Target's decision to phase out its DEI programs, activists led by

Nekima Levy Armstrong of the Racial Justice Network called for a national boycott of the retailer, accusing it of yielding to political pressure and undermining previous commitments to diversity.

These actions reflect a broader mobilization among Black leadership organizations and civil rights groups to resist policy changes they perceive as detrimental to racial equity and inclusion in the United States.

## Companies Scaling back DEI

Several prominent U.S. companies have scaled back their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives due to political pressures. Notable examples include:

**Meta Platforms Inc.:** The parent company of Facebook has reduced its DEI investments, influenced by external pressures and legal challenges.

**Walmart Inc.:** The retail giant has curtailed its DEI efforts, aligning with broader corporate trends.

**Amazon:** The e-commerce leader has scaled back its DEI programs in response to evolving corporate strategies.

**McDonald's Corporation:** The fast-food chain has reduced its DEI initiatives, reflecting a shift in corporate focus.

**Ford Motor Company:** The automaker has re-evaluated its DEI policies, leading to a reduction in related programs.

**Lowe's Companies, Inc.:** The home improvement retailer has scaled back its DEI efforts, influenced by external pressures and legal challenges.

**Harley-Davidson:** The motorcycle manufacturer has reduced its DEI initiatives, aligning with broader corporate trends.

**John Deere:** The agricultural equipment company has curtailed its DEI programs, reflecting a shift in corporate focus.

**Target:** The retailer has scaled back its DEI efforts, influenced by external pressures and legal challenges.

These decisions are part of a broader trend where companies are reassessing their DEI commitments in light of changing political climates and societal expectations.

## Black Cowboys of the Old West - Setting The Record Straight

By Donald Lee

James Stewart. John Wayne. Randolph Scott. Clint Eastwood. Kirk Douglas. Clayton Moore.

The faces of any one of the aforementioned names --- or any other white actor who portrayed cowboys in Western films --- is most likely to be the image that comes to mind when one thinks of the Old West.

That's because the media, in general, and Hollywood, in particular, and American history books, especially, have been masters at deception -- projecting images that show cowboys (virtually all of whom were white in *their* narratives) as heroes who pioneered the Old West.

The other thing that happened was that Black cowboys were conveniently omitted from literature chronicling the contributions of those who had a hand in the settling of what is often referred to as the "Old West," or the "Wild West."

That era, which dates back to the time following the American Civil War (1861-1865), was a pivotal point in history that highlighted the men who rounded up wild mustangs and cattle for ranches, and drove them some 800-plus miles, while on horseback, via cattle drives from places like south Texas on up to Kansas, where they'd meet the railhead.

From there, the livestock would be loaded onto boxcars and transported to a variety of other states who had a dire need for beef, especially since Northern states had depleted much of their beef supply during the Civil War.

So, *his* story" told the adventures of white Americans who braved the frontiers of America's Western region. But *real* history tells the *true* story of what happened during the era that spanned



Donald Lee serves as herd drover in the Fort Worth Stockyards.

from 1866 into the early 1900s and how diverse life on the prairie actually was.

Uncut history informs us that one-fourth of the men working ranches, handling horses and cattle, were black. In fact, that's how the term "cowboy" came into being.

"All of my daddy's brothers --- Jack Frank, Cosied (pronounced Coseed) Frank, Albert Frank, Leo Frank --- all these guys, my daddy and my uncles, all worked ranches," says Beaumont, Texas, cowboy Preston Frank, 79, speaking of his dad, Floyd Frank, and his uncles.

"They kept the fences done, they had to worm the cattle," says Preston Frank, owner of Frank's Arena in Cheek, Texas, a rural community just outside Beaumont, and founder-owner of Rough-Rid-

ers Rodeo Association in Beaumont.

"They don't want to give Black people the credit for running these ranches," says Preston Frank, who is black. "The McFaddens and Boyts didn't do that work. The Black people did."

The McFaddens and the Boyts were two prominent families --- among southeast Texas' first settlers --- who owned ranches and farms in the Beaumont area.

In speaking on the origin of the word "cowboy," Preston Frank says, "(The Black people were) helping momma cows birth calves, that's what cowboys did. That's why they were called cowboys because they took care of the cows.

"Whites didn't want to do that work because it was a minimum-wage job."

Somewhere along the way, though,

Hollywood took the term "cowboy" and glamorized it, and "ranch hands," which were what whites who did ranch work were referred to as, embraced it and started calling themselves cowboys, Frank says.

Another thing that Hollywood did was create a fictitious character, "The Lone Ranger," whose heroic deeds in the Wild West were based off real-life lawman, Bass Reeves, a black U.S. deputy marshal working the land west of the Mississippi River.

Reeves gained notoriety for nabbing some 4,000 outlaws, often doing so by wearing various disguises in the late 19th century.

Clayton Moore was the white actor who portrayed the Lone Ranger, the white character who dons a mask and fights outlaws in the Old West, with his sidekick native American named Tonto, in the TV series which ran from 1949 to 1957.

On another note: In the sport of rodeo, there's an event called steer wrestling, also called "bulldogging," in which a cowboy, who is chasing a steer while mounted on a horse, slides off the horse as he grabs the steer by the horns and wrestles it down to the ground.

The popular event was invented by Bill Pickett, a Black cowboy who, in the late 1800s, developed the technique of steer wrestling while working on a ranch. He'd seen a bull dog latch on to the nose of a steer and wrestle it to the ground. Pickett, impressed by the dog, mimicked what the dog did by wrestling steers to the ground by biting them on the nose, a sensitive area on the steer.

Nat (pronounced Nate) Love was an-

See **COWBOYS**, page 2

# Opinion

## Stay Afloat: Don't Let the Outside In

By Rusty Potter

Last year, my wife and I went on a cruise to Cozumel, Mexico, on the *Martiner of the Seas*. The water was crystal blue, and the boat glided smoothly through the waves. But what stood out most to me wasn't just the open sea; it was the ship's engineering. No matter how rough the water or hard the wind blew, the boat stayed smoothly afloat because it was built to keep what was outside from getting inside.

Life works the same way. Challenges, negativity, and setbacks are like the ocean surrounding us. We're built to handle them - as long as we don't let them seep into our minds and hearts. A ship does not sink because of the water around it; it only goes down when water gets inside.

In life, we don't stumble because of



Rusty Potter

what's happening around us. We may stumble because of what we allow to take hold of our minds.

It's easy to let the negativity of the world creep into our minds. People will talk, storms will rise, and

doubt will knock at our door. The key to staying afloat is guarding your thoughts and your mind. When we allow outside negativity to take root in our minds, it begins to weigh us down, slowly sinking our confidence, motivation, and self-worth.

Think about a time when someone doubted you or criticized your dreams; maybe it was a coworker or a friend. If you allowed their words to linger in your mind, they likely began to influence your

goals or even considered giving up altogether. But here's the truth: other people's opinions don't define your potential. Their doubts are not your reality.

During the cruise, I noticed the crew members constantly monitoring the ship, checking to ensure everything stayed in working order. In the same way, we must regularly check our thoughts and emotions.

Are you letting doubt or negativity seep in? If so, patch the leaks with positivity, faith, and perseverance.

One way to do this is by surrounding yourself with people who lift you instead of dragging you down. Your supporters should encourage you to celebrate your victories and remind you of your strengths.

Another important practice is speaking life into yourself. Replace

self-doubt with self-confidence. Focus on what's going right instead of dwelling on what's going wrong. Your words have power - use them to build yourself up.

Finally, be mindful of what you are allowing to go into your mind. Just like a ship can't afford to take on water, you can't afford to absorb toxic influences. Choose to fill your mind with inspiration, knowledge, and encouragement.

Life's storms are inevitable, but sinking is not. As long as we protect our minds, no external force can pull us under. Stay anchored in faith, focus on your goals, and remember, you're built to withstand a storm. You are built for this!

Protect your mind, guard your heart, and sail forward with confidence. The storms may come, and the tides may roll. As long as you don't let them inside, you'll remain unsinkable.

## Living While Black Is a Difficult Proposition, and Can Be Hazardous to Your Health

By Prentiss Smith

Recently, a longtime friend of mine, who happens to be white, asked me "why do black people always seem to talk about race and racism." My reply to him was that most black people I know don't always talk about race or racism, except in the context of responding to what they rightly perceive as unfair or unjust treatment. I also told him that most black people I know are just trying to live their lives in the best way they can, but the truth is that living while black is a difficult proposition in America, and can be hazardous to your mental, physical, and spiritual health.

Dealing with people's conscious and unconscious biases all the time can be traumatic, but it doesn't have to be determinative or punitive. Racism and its remnants can truly be a grind on the mind, body, and soul.

My friend genuinely wanted to talk about race, and we had an honest conversation. We realized that it's not always



Prentiss Smith

as bad as it sometimes appears and it's certainly nowhere near as good as it should be. It's somewhere in the middle. He acknowledged that there is a problem with racial profiling and the marginalization of blacks and other people of color.

It was a teachable moment for both of us, and I realized that there are a lot of white people just like him who just want to have an honest discussion about race and voice their opinions without being vilified or called racists because they may have a different view about the issue. People must speak openly and honestly to each other about implicit and explicit racism and bigotry.

We all have our prejudices, but not all of us traffic in the prejudice of skin color. Marginalizing people because of the color of their skin is one of the worst forms of prejudice and bigotry. It is insidious,

pernicious and hurtful. That hurt can be seen on the faces and in the eyes of black people who have been wrongly accused or targeted because they are black.

The reality is that racism will always be an issue in America. It is a part of the American story because of slavery and Jim Crowe. America has come a long way with respect to race and race relations, but there is still a lot of work to be done, especially when there are still people who use race to divide us among ourselves.

As I stated earlier, living while black is a difficult proposition in this country, and can be hazardous to a person's mental, physical, and spiritual health. That's just a fact. That's not hyperbole. Just ask the young black woman who the police were called on because she was "sleeping while black" in her own dormitory at Yale, or the young black couple who the police were called on because they were "vacationing while black" at an air BNB that they had rented, or the two young black men who the police were called on because they were

"waiting while black" for a meeting with a white business partner at Starbucks.

These are just a few of the recent instances where black people have been wrongly targeted because of the color of their skin. This is something that black people go through every day living while black. It is wrong, and it is hurtful. The incident at Starbucks became the impetus for the company to shut down its 8000 plus stores for racial sensitivity training.

At the end of the day, most people in this country are not racists. Blacks and whites are living together, working alongside each other in their daily lives, and co-existing as friends and neighbors all over this country. The problem is that there is a small but vocal group of haters who continue to stir the racial pot, which can and does make living while black hazardous to one's mental, physical and spiritual health. We can do better, and most of us are trying to do better. We are still a work in progress, but I am hopeful in 2025. And that's my take. smithpren@aol.com

# News



Preston Frank (far left) standing with other Cowboys.

### COWBOYS from page 1

other influential cowboy who was Black. During the post-Civil War era, Love herded cattle up the popular Chisholm Trail, which stretched from south Texas to Abilene, Kan.

Love, who also went by "Deadwood Dick," was also the author of eight books, including "The Life and Adventures of Nat Love."

Another name Black people can be proud of is that of Fred Whitfield, the legendary pro rodeo cowboy who retired from competition in the Pro Rodeo Cowboys Association after winning seven world titles in tie-down roping and once winning the National Final Rodeo's All-Around title.

To put it in perspective: The Pro Rodeo Cowboys Association is the "NFL" of rodeo, and the National Finals Rodeo, or "NFR," is the "Super Bowl" of rodeo.

Whitfield, 57, also is in the ProRodeo Hall of Fame and Museum.

There are so many black cowboys who are making names for themselves

in the sport of professional rodeo and who continue to work ranches, and ride their horses in trail rides, not just in Texas, Oklahoma, Montana and other states known for the cowboy culture, but also in Louisiana as well.

Darryl Guillory, a Black cowboy from Church Point, La., is known for his cattle-handling skills and horsemanship. He was once featured in International Magazine *Kreol*.

And yet another fact worth mentioning is that Quinceola Reid, in 2021, became the first Black woman drover for the Fort Worth Herd, which is the program in the Fort Worth, Texas, Stockyards managed by Visit Fort Worth, formerly known as the Fort Worth Conventions & Visitors Bureau.

The Herd drives 17 head of Longhorns a fourth of a mile twice daily, seven days a week, year-round for visitors in commemoration of the cattle drives of the 1800s.

*Donald Lee, a Black cowboy, is a 1993 graduate of Grambling State University's Mass Communication department and former editor-in-chief of The Gramblinite.*



Quinceola Reid, in 2021, became the first Black woman drover for the Fort Worth herd.

### Grambling Connection Staff

**Lena W. Claybon**  
 Founding Publisher / Managing Editor  
**Joice M. Dunn**  
 Co-Publisher / Editor  
**Prentiss Smith**  
 Contributing Writer  
**Designed by Get Current Studio**  
 CEO, Michael Grant  
 Creative Director, Kenyon Shafer

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## Community

## Joseph W. Capers Makes His Mark

By Joice M. Dunn

Dr. Joseph W. Capers left his mark at Grambling State University, holding a number of positions and wearing many hats, throughout his 35 years.

Capers looks back fondly on his time in the Grambling community, having managed a car dealership in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as well as managing a bookstore on Main Street in Grambling. He was also instrumental in helping to organize Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity at Southern University in Baton Rouge. Capers served in the Korean War and served as a judicial judge of the C.M.E. churches.

Capers came to Grambling to teach biology from Jasper Henderson High School in Chatham, Louisiana in 1959. While teaching classes at Lincoln High School in Ruston, a predominately Black high school in Lincoln parish, Capers taught evening classes at the university and laboratory classes. He was instrumental in allowing the university to receive its first electron microscope, an accomplishment that Capers said he is still proud of.

In 1978 Capers began serving as assistant to the vice president for academic affairs (then Dr. Lamore J. Carter) at Grambling until 1980. Later, taking on the position as Dean of the College of Basic and Special studies until 1994.

Other hats Capers wore at Grambling included Academic Scholarship chair, Director of the High Ability Program, High School Relations Director of Recruitment and Continuing Education, Associate Dean of Division of Academic Support Services and Dean of the College of Basic and Special Studies.

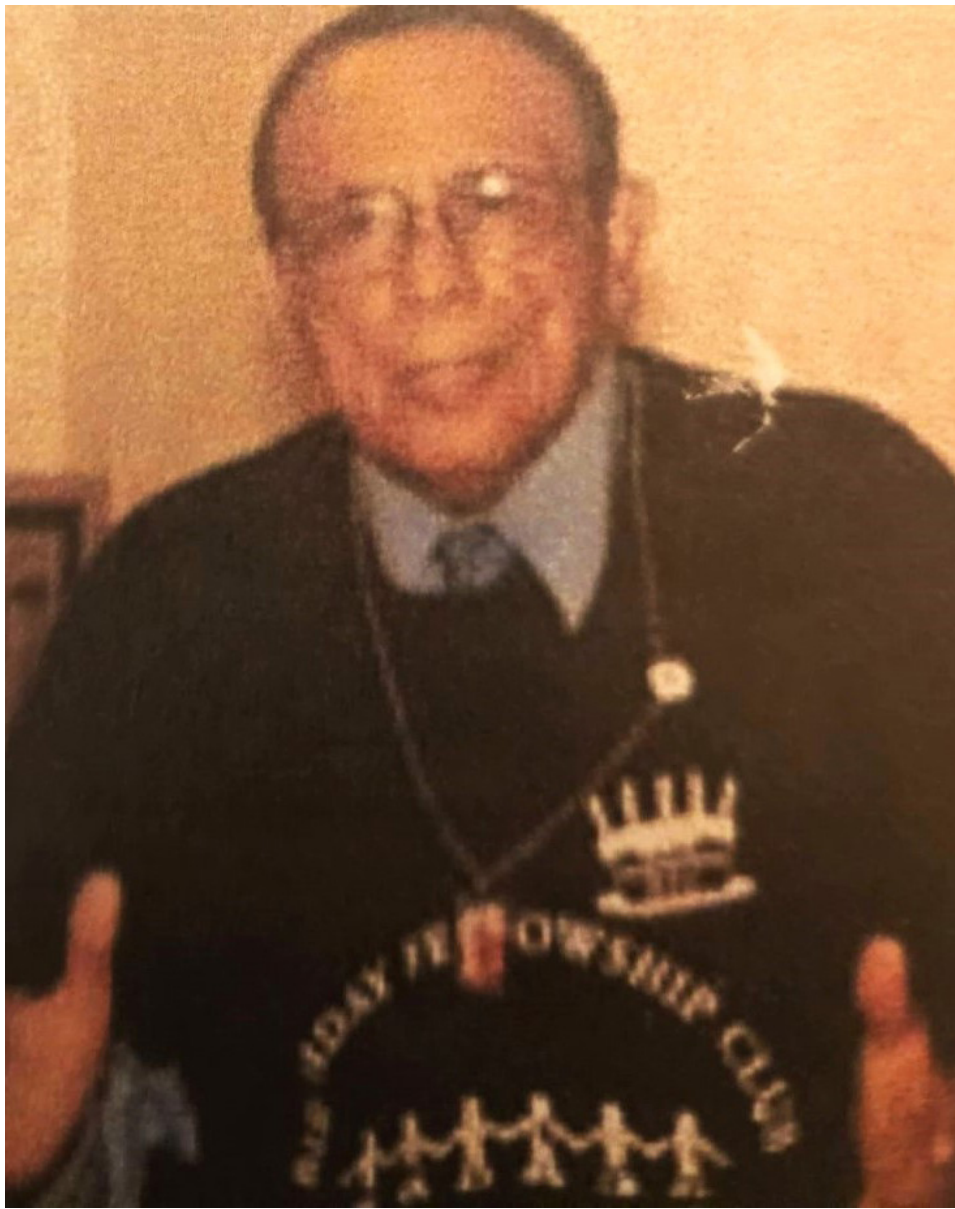
In 2006 Dr. Capers was named Dean Emeritus, College of Basic Studies, at Grambling State University, for his hard work and dedication to the position.

"I shall always cherish the years that I was employed at Grambling State University," Dr. Capers said.

Not only did Capers make his mark on the educational front but reached further and shared his knowledge spiritually in the Grambling community and surrounding areas.

"I love learning, I love helping people and I want to do as much of those two things as I possibly could," Capers said.

Dr. Capers believed that each position he held at GSU was exciting, challenging and rewarding.



Joseph Capers receives an award from Brinda Hopkins, a Birthday Day Club member.

"I had the opportunity to touch the lives of many students. I did my best as a professor, director and academic dean. My attendance was perfect. I don't remember being absent a day during my tenure," recalled capers.

Once leaving Grambling State, Dr. Capers continued to spread knowledge at Wiley College in Texas.

Capers has received four degrees: a Bachelor of Science degree from Southern Baton Rouge, two Masters of Science, one from Oklahoma State University, biology from the University of Southern California and a Ph.D. in biological science from the University of North Texas. All accomplished during his 30's. He didn't stop there but gained a theology certification from the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC).

"Religion has always played a significant role in my life. I think I was the only man there who wasn't a preacher of some sort," he said.

He recalled as a child growing up in Princeton, Louisiana with his four brothers and two sisters, having very little, but a great deal of love and care. Capers father was a Methodist preacher and his mother was a housewife. A smile came to his face as he reflected on walking miles to attend church services and revival meetings along with his siblings and relatives.

Since retirement, Dr. Capers continues to keep himself busy in different walks of life.

He serves as president of the area Birthday Fellowship Club and coordinator of the GSU Tiger Men Club.

The Birthday Fellowship Club celebrated its 20th anniversary Wednesday, Jan. 8, and Capers gave certificates of appreciation to club members for their service. Under his guidance as president, the club has been reaching out to residents of the community in Lincoln Parish for 20 years now as a non-profit organization.

Dr. Capers is also involved in giving seminars on "Understanding Scripture" and religious topics as well as academic matters. He is a presiding elder in the CME church and an Ordained Lay Minister in the CME Church worldwide.

In addition to this, he writes for the Christian Index – the official publication of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church – worldwide. He also writes for *The Monroe Dispatch*, a weekly newspaper.

He is married to Rosie Capers, and is the father of four children and eight grandchildren.

## Announcements

**'No Limit' accepting registration for 2025-2026**

The No Limit Soldiers Program is accepting registration and sign-ups. All area youth are encouraged to come out and participate. For additional information please contact Howard Kirkpatrick, 318-497-2978, Montez Moss, 318-243-7451 or Kelli Granger at 318-664-5435

**HELP agency offers assistance to Parish residents**

Humanitarian Enterprises of Lincoln Parish (H.E.L.P.) is now scheduling appointments to assist families with heating bills. Appointments will be scheduled on a first-come first-served basis until all appointment times are filled or funds are depleted.

Interested persons may schedule an appointment by phone at (318) 251-5136 or in person at 307 N. Homer Street, second floor, in Ruston, each Friday at 8 a.m. until appointment times are filled. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Monday appointments are designated for elderly and/or disabled applicants. Applicants must present a current utility bill, proof of total monthly household income, social security cards for all household members and proof of ID.

The Income Guidelines are as follows:  
• Annual Income Based on 60% of Estimate State Median Income are as fol-

lows: Family size of one \$2,491; family of two \$3,257; family of three \$4,024; family of four \$4,790; family of five \$5,556; family of six \$6,323; family of seven \$6,467; family of eight \$6,610; family of nine \$6,754; and family of 10 \$6,898.

For additional information, call (318) 251-5136 and services are available to all people.

**Wreath recycling, free tombstone cleaning available**

Dr. Frances Staten, founder of the Longevity Project, is asking the community to join her in recycling wreaths like the ones placed on the tombstones of veterans. The wreaths will be placed on cemetery trees, and tombstones of Centenarians and veterans during Black History Month.

The project also includes the cleaning of the tombstone of persons who died as centenarians as part of the Black History Project. There will be a cleaning training provided by Jason Church, renowned Cemetery Preservationist. If anyone is interested in receiving training, please call 318-436-9572.

**NAMI Family support group holds meeting**

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) will hold a support group meeting Thursday, Feb. 20 at 2 p.m. in the Lincoln Parish Library, George By-

rnside Conference Room, 910 North Trenton St., Ruston. The meetings will continue each third Thursday of each month until December.

Dr. Jeannetta Stephens-Jones, Ed. D and Dr. Shirley Burch, Ph.D., will be present as well as NAMI Certified Peer Facilitators. Other group meetings will be held March 20, April 17 and May 15. The meetings will continue to be held June 19, July 17 and August 21. The next set of meetings will be held September 18, October 16, November 20 and December 18.

Anyone at least 18 years old may RSVP to jones79aka@yahoo.com or call (318) 614-1961 or SJBurch57@gmail.com or call (318) 350-1612. The meetings are free to the public and all are invited to attend.

**NAACP meetings are set for third Thursday**

The Grambling Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) hosts its regular monthly meeting on teleconference every third Thursday at 6 p.m. The meeting will also include the installation of new officers.

Meetings are on teleconference -717-908-1834; Access Code 621055# and annual dues are due for the year. Make checks payable to Grambling Branch NAACP (#6094) and mail to P.O. Box 521, Grambling, LA 71245.

Membership is available to the public, either as an adult or as a youth (ages 7 to 17). Memberships for adults are \$30 a year and presently, the \$10.00 dues for children have been waived.

For additional information, please call or text 318-680-7679, Grace Tatem.

**NAACP Youth to sponsor raffle**

The Youth Councils of District "G" of the LA State NAACP is sponsoring a raffle on a chance to win a 63" TV for \$2 per ticket. The drawing will be held Friday, February 28.

The raffle is an effort to raise funds to visit the Civil Rights Museum in Washington D.C in July or August 2025. You do not have to be present to win.

For information, contact Grace Tatem, 318-680-7679.

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# Community

## Pinkie C. Wilkerson 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration

By Joice M. Dunn

Pinkie C. Wilkerson who served her community as a member of the Louisiana House of Representatives from 1992 until her death on August 1, 2000, was remembered during the 25<sup>th</sup> year of her death. The late Wilkerson, a native of Grambling, was known for her advocacy for District 11 and her passion to serve as well as bring attention to the unique needs of rural areas. The luncheon celebration was held in the Eugene Smith Event Center in Arcadia Saturday, Feb 1, 2025.

The Pinkie C. Wilkerson Foundation was established in 2002 to continue her legacy of service to the communities in Louisiana's District 11.

"I was elected president of the Foundation in 2023 and re-elected for 2025-2027. The Foundation was designed to recognize community leaders who have provided exemplary service and leadership to the community. The recipients honored were selected by the Remembering Pinkie committee based on nominations or suggestions from the Board," explained Elizabeth Smith, foundation president.

The 15 honorees who exemplified the spirit of servant leadership of the late District 11 State Rep. Pinkie Carolyn Wilkerson included:

In the area of education, honorees included Martin Lemelle, 11th President of Grambling State University, Donald White, and the late Coach Michael Lyons.

As President, Dr. Martin Lemelle leads Grambling State University with a vision that honors its history while focusing on innovation, academic excellence, and community engagement. As a third-generation alumnus of the institution, Dr. Lemelle embodies a family legacy of higher education leadership and a profound dedication to the university's mission.

Dr. Donald S. White's illustrious career encompasses a wide range of leadership roles, most notably as the former Dean of the College of Business at Grambling State University. Throughout his tenure, Dr. White has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and community engagement.

Honored posthumously, a man held in high esteem by his peers, Coach Michael Lyons was honored many times for his accomplishments on and off the court. Coach Lyons was a man of great character. He was one of the most respected men to ever coach in high school interscholastic sports. Coach Lyons was also a member of the Grambling State University Gallery of Distinction and the Boys' Top 28 Hall of Fame.

Politics/Civic Engagement honorees were Alicia Williams, District 11 State Rep. Rashid Young, Danielle Williams, William "Bill" Smith and The Ruston Voters



Commemorative Poster Celebrating Pinkie C. Wilkerson

League.

Alicia Williams became the first African American appointed to the staff of U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA). In 1997, Alicia returned to Capitol Hill as Office Manager/Executive Assistant for Senator Landrieu. In 2016, the LA Democratic Party tapped her to assist with elections in North Louisiana. She was asked to join the Governor John Bel Edwards team. For the past eight years, she has served as Senior Special Assistant to the Governor. She is currently retired from the federal government and is taking some time before deciding the next chapter of her life.

Rashid Young is an attorney and a member of the Louisiana Bar Association, National Bar Association, and is allowed to practice law in Louisiana. He obtained his Juris Doctor degree from Southern University Law Center.

While in law school, Rashid obtained a credential of readiness certificate from Harvard Business School.

Formerly an educator, he started as a high school teacher at his alma mater, Homer High School. He rose through the education ranks quickly and by the time he was 29 years old, Rashid would be named the founding Chief Operations Officer of Lincoln Preparatory School in Grambling.

Dr. Danielle Williams has over 19 years of experience in teaching and learning, serving as a mentor, grant writer, special education teacher, professor, and Central Office District Administrator. Dr. Williams also serves as vice president of the Lincoln Parish School Board. She is honored to serve in the same community that provided her with a high-quality education. She campaigned on a promise of "test scores and transparency". Her commitment to public service is unwavering.

Billy Ray Smith is a native of Ruston, an activist and a veteran of the United States Air Force. Smith graduated from Lincoln High School Class of 1967. He attended Grambling College on a baseball scholarship and ended up playing golf.

Smith was the first Black Legislative Assistant to Senator Charles Barham in 1975 and served on the State Parks Commission Board, as well as a member of Ruston Voters League and American Legion Post two.

Veda B Emerson is currently President of The Ruston Voters League. Emerson is a legacy of empowerment, a beacon of change, and an unwavering voice for justice. Founded in 1963 by trailblazers Clara Carr, John Tellis, Annie Brown (Emerson's mother), Ernestine Smith, L. D. Moore and furthered by the late Representative Pinkie C. Wilkerson, the Ruston Voters League has been a cornerstone of democracy throughout the surrounding communities. The League has tirelessly championed voter education, advocacy, and community engagement. They are a vital pillar of the Grambling community, dedicated to promoting fairness, equity, and active citizenship for all.

Honorees for Humanitarian Service were Kadar Dennis, Edgar Hill, Grace Tatum, and the late Tyrone Jacobs.

Kadar Dennis is a 20 Year employee of The Social Security Administration of Dallas. He is the Co-Owner of Entertainment Etc. & FryDaddyz Katering Kompany, as well as Co-Founder of the City of Grambling School Supply Giveaway and Christmas Dinner Giveaway.

Edgar Lance Hill currently owns and operates Copycats Printing in Ruston. He is co-owner of Entertainment Etc. and FryDaddyz Katering. Through these businesses, he and his partner, Kadar Dennis, give back to the community. FryDaddyz Katering hosts a yearly food

See **PINKIE**, page 5

## CITY OF GRAMBLING CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH



At the City of Grambling, we proudly carry the torch to light up the historical innovations, integral ingenuity, and creativity, as Afro descendants within the United States of America. Such influence that has been intricately embedded into the very core and progression of this nation. The duly recognition of **Black History Month** is a time we reflect publicly, celebrating our contributions and great heritage, while reaching forward to secure an even brighter future! To join the celebration, meet us on February 15th at 12:00 p.m., downtown Grambling, for a community parade, followed by our Black History Program at City Hall, where we will further highlight African American's contributions to the Workforce Labor Movement!

**Mayor Alvin Bradley**

# In Remembrance...

## Remembering long-time professor Ruby Lewis



On August 30, 1950, God blessed the union of Bob and Evelyn Lewis with the last of their 11 children, a baby girl they named Ruby Mae Lewis. Ruby was raised in a large, loving family in Minden. The Lewis' children were encouraged to excel academically, and Ruby was no exception. A graduate of Webster High School, she went on to receive her B.S. and M.Ed. from Southern University, and Ph.D. from Kansas State University.

Dr. Lewis was a passionate and devoted educator. She taught at Urbana High School in Urbana, IL, and at Southern University in Shreveport. For over four decades, Dr. Ruby M. Lewis taught and trained students at Grambling State University (GSU) in the essentials of proper grammar and com-

position. Her expertise was legendary, and she was a valued faculty member of the GSU College of Arts & Sciences as a tenured Professor in the English Department. Dr. Lewis was a highly sought-after teacher, mentor, and counselor. Faculty members often deferred to her, and many current and former undergraduate and graduate students lauded her teaching as helping them reach their educational goals and to excel professionally. Desiring to finish her life's purpose, Dr. Lewis opted to continue her journey as an academician until her death on January 19, 2025.

Dr. Lewis was the general editor of *Black Orpheus: Rhetoric and Readings* (1st ed. 1996; 2nd ed. 2002). She donated approximately \$60,000 to the GSU English Department from

the proceeds of this text for academic scholarships, scholastic awards, scholarly programs and events, computer equipment, faculty travel, and professional development.

Ruby's personal attributes rivaled those of her education and profession. She loved collecting antiques, and her vast collection of one-of-a-kind pieces has been heralded by other collectors. Ruby was an immaculate dresser, and she accentuated her wardrobe with eye-catching turquoise jewelry and her head was often adorned with a big, color coordinated extravagant hat. She relished being a great storyteller, peppering her stories for cause and effect. Ruby loved poetry and literature and would share the works of her favorite poets and authors with others.

## Doris Jane Slankard; A Life Well-Lived

April 21, 1938 –  
January 26, 2025

Submitted by Family

Former longtime Grambling and Lincoln Parish resident, Doris Jane Slankard died Jan 26, 2025 in Texas. Doris was the mother of Brenda Stevens Ryan (Class of 1976), Mindy Stevens Lewis (Class of 1978), and Marianne Stevens Leclerc (Class of 1980), – all alumni of GSU laboratory schools. She was also the former wife of Coach Ed Stevens who coached football and women's track at GSU.

Doris was born on April 21, 1938 in the San Joaquin Valley of central California in the rural farm town of Delano on a small farm owned by her parents. She attended Delano schools and graduated from Delano High School in 1956. Doris attended Fresno State University majoring in journalism before putting her education on hold to get married and start a family. In the summer of 1969, Doris moved with her husband when he accepted a coaching position with Eddie Robinson at Grambling State University. It was very brave of her to move away from family and friends in California with three young girls. She took advantage of the opportunity to re-enroll in college and earned her journalism degree from Grambling in 1972 becoming the first person in her family to graduate from college. She continued her education by enrolling in the nursing program at Louisiana Tech University and graduated with her RN degree in 1976. Doris worked at the then Lincoln General Hospital until she retired as the Director of Inservice Education.

Although not the life path she started on, she was very proud of the fact that she completed both degrees with honors and was able to support herself comfortably for the remainder of her life. She was also proud that her daughters were educated and had both good careers and a good family life. She loved that all seven of her grandchildren graduated from college and loved to hear about their ongoing accomplishments and antidotes about her great-grandchildren.

After her retirement, Doris chose to relocate to Sun City in Georgetown to be closer to her children and grandchildren. When her eyesight no longer



allowed her to live on her own, she was lovingly taken into the home of her daughter and son-in-law, Brenda and Michael where she lived for 8 years. Her final years were spent at Trinity care home in Round Rock, TX where she was well cared for.

Her life taught us lessons on being better people, better mothers, and better friends. We know she was proud of us always and we hope she knew we were proud of her too.

Doris is survived by:

Daughter Brenda and son-in-law, Michael Ryan of Round Rock; grandson Daniel and his partner Riley of Cedar Park, TX; and grandson Kevin Lindsay-Ryan and wife Hannah Lindsay-Ryan of Austin, TX.

Daughter Mindy and son-in-law Rick Lewis of Round Rock; granddaughter Andi Ybarra, her husband Marc Ybarra and daughter Drue Jane Ybarra of Houston, TX; granddaughter Sydney Jane of San Francisco, CA; granddaughter Bryn Kline, her husband Pete Kline and daughter Farley Rae Kline, of Santa Rosa, CA; and grandson Tucker Lewis Albuquerque, NM

Daughter Marianne and son-in-law François Leclerc of Dallas, TX and their daughter Cécile Leclerc.

Her family appreciates the loving thoughts and prayers sent her way. In lieu of flowers or other remembrances, please toast with her with a delicious piece of chocolate, her favorite indulgence.

## The life story of Edna Willis

Edna Willis, the youngest of eight children, was born on June 19, 1940, in Minden, Louisiana, to the late Annie Faye Johnson and Ardis Johnson.

Edna graduated as the Salutatorian of her 1958 class from Webster High School in Minden. She was an active member of Mount Calm Baptist Church in Minden. After high school, Edna enrolled at Grambling State University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in nutrition dietetics in 1962. She was a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha.

Edna was married to Howard Willis in 1962. To this union three children were born: Paelma Charissa Willis, Derrick Earl Willis and Keith Howard Willis.

She had a dedicated 38-year career at Grambling, where she worked as a dietitian assistant director. She retired in 2000 as the dietitian director in the



Health & Nutrition Department.

On Friday, January 31, God called Edna home.

## Irene Thomas: A life lived, a legacy left

On September 8, 1940, in the grandest fall fashion, in Ringgold, Louisiana, Booker T. Ammons and Pecola Johnson Ammons welcomed their first of two baby girls. They named her Irene Shrevon and what joy she added to their lives. As she grew, they soon came to know she would be smart, tenacious, strong-willed and never accept less than the best from herself or anyone else.

She accepted Christ at an early age and united with the New Star Baptist Church of Ringgold under the leadership of Pastor A.L. Harris, Sr. Irene was educated in the schools of Ringgold and graduated from Southside High School (now Ringgold High School). She graduated from Grambling College (now The Grambling State University) with a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education. She achieved endearing membership in the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Delta Iota Chapter, April 29, 1960. Irene furthered her education with a Master of Science degree from Louisiana Tech University.

After college graduation, Irene relocated to California for a short time. She returned to Louisiana to work in the Office of the Registrar under Mrs. Ruby Billups at Grambling. She later became the director of Admissions, Director of the Enrollment Center (Admissions & Registrar's Office) and retired as University Registrar after more than 30 years of service.

Irene met and fell in love with Leon Thomas II, whom she married on June 1, 1968. She loved him deeply and af-



fectionally him "Wolf." There was never doubt that she loved that tall, Black man." To this union, two bouncing baby boys were born: Leon, III and LeRon.

As years moved on, Leon and Irene united with Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church of Grambling, where they both were very active until their health began to decline. Irene was most noted and hailed as a dynamic speaker. She was often invited to speak at various events across the state of Louisiana and even the country. There was a distinct rise and fall in her voice that prolifically conveyed whatever message she was delivering.

PINKIE from page 4

giveaway for the community and Entertainment Etc. hosts a yearly school supply giveaway for the community as well.

Dr. Grace Tatum founded two professional organizations: The National Association of University Women in March 1988 and the Association of Black Social Workers. Both are now defunct in Grambling. She also assisted in reactivating the Grambling Branch of the NAACP and chaired the first Freedom Fund Banquet held in Grambling in April 2004. Currently she chairs the Advisory Board of the School of Social Work at GSU and serves on the Advisory Board of the Nursing Department at GSU.

Tyrone Jacobs, honored posthumously, was a philanthropist who generously donated his time and resources to local organizations and causes dear to his heart including Grambling State University, the Pinkie C. Wilkerson Life Development Center, and Fleetz-Allz Satellite Technology (donated backpacks with school supplies and Christmas gifts).

Honorees being celebrated for going Above and Beyond Scope of their pro-



Members of Delta Sigma Theta were on hand to celebrate their Soror Pinkie.

fession to serve the community included Rhonda Pruitt, Lafaye Jackson, and Melinda Willis.

Before relocating into the Grambling/Ruston area, Dr. Rhonda Pruitt served as staff dentist at the David Rainrs Community Health center in both

Shreveport and Gilliam, Louisiana. She also served as a staff dentist at the Cadco Correction Center and adjunct professor in the College of Allied Health at Southern University- Shreveport. She has been very active in her local community. Dr. Pruitt provides dental services

to the inmates at the Lincoln Parish detention center. She also provides dental services to reserve service members enlisted in the National Guard, Marines, and Army at facilities throughout the state. Dr. Pruitt supports and contributes numerous other organizations in her community.

At the age of 102, Lafaye Jackson continues to live a full life of servant leadership. Lafaye is a matriarch, mother, grandmother, aunt, and cousin to a large family. She's also an influencer, trailblazer, and trusted advisor to many which expands beyond her family to a vast community of friends and associates.

Dr. Melinda Willis has served at the Bienville Family Clinic since 2016. Dr. Willis believes in quality health care for all people regardless of ability to pay. She believes this to be consistent with the spirit of Representative Pookie Wilkerson; as Rep. Wilkerson too believed that all people should have access to quality healthcare, regardless of age, gender, race, or ability to pay.

"The Foundation will celebrate 25 years of being in existence in 2026 and we will likely have a series of events/programs to commemorate the milestone", said Smith.

# Church News

## Wisdom on how to ‘fireproof’ marriages

By Donald Lee

The movie “Fireproof,” starring Kirk Cameron, opens with the scene that shows Cameron’s character, Fire Capt. Caleb Holt, reprimanding a subordinate after they return from fighting a fire.

“Eric, he’s got a *right* to be upset with you,” the captain says immediately after another fireman rebukes that subordinate, Eric Harmon (Jason McLeod). “You left him in a dangerous spot and tried to be a hero.”

“But Captain,” Eric responds, “I thought I heard someone calling for help.”

“It was coming from *outside* the building,” the captain interjects.

“But it was so dark, I mean I couldn’t see anything,” Eric tries to explain.

“*That’s* why you stay *with* your partner,” the captain says. “He had no choice but to assume that something happened to you and you needed his help. You *never* leave your partner — especially in a fire.”

“You give him some time and then give him an apology,” he says. “And make it sincere.”

“Yes, Sir,” Eric responds.



Donald Lee

Capt. Holt pats Eric on the back and then walks off.

While the captain approaches his job of putting out literal fires with great passion and wisdom, the film is about how he lacks that same zeal and is

ignorant when it comes to extinguishing the metaphorical fires that threaten his marriage.

This movie is an accurate depiction of so many real-life marriages. Husbands and wives, in many marital relationships, put their hearts and souls into their careers or rendering aid to others while failing to protect their own “partners” in marriage.

For reasons such as this, it is important that couples, in general, seek counseling, and Christian couples, particularly, get that counseling from their pastor.

It would also be a great idea to get the movie “Fireproof”. It offers sound advice on the how-to part of fireproofing your marriage.

One of the things that counseling does

for a marriage, especially one that is on the brink of a divorce, is help either side of an argument look at issues from the perspective of the other.

When it’s just the spouses dealing with each other one on one, it can be easy for legitimate concerns to be challenged. But when a counselor is involved, those same concerns get the necessary attention they deserve.

In acknowledging that there are spouses who may not feel comfortable in a formal counseling setting with a “pastor” or professional counselor, there’s an option that can be just as effective.

That being one in which there’s a third party involved, a friend that both the husband and wife have immense, mutual respect for — one who is big on integrity and is spiritually mature enough to not take sides. Such a person would “counsel” the couple.

But if that doesn’t work as a first resort, then formal counseling is highly recommended — very necessary.

A word to anybody who puts anything other than God ahead of his, or her, spouse: Your first “ministry” is supposed to be “home.” Ministry is service. It is

wrong to walk past your hurting spouse — being oblivious or indifferent to their pain — while going to provide the best “service” you can to strangers on the job or anywhere else.

Put another way, such an act is called hypocrisy.

If you’re single and in a relationship in which the ultimate goal is marriage, let the wisdom shared here be something that you adhere to.

I’d be remiss to recommend “Fireproof” as a great movie to watch as a resource of having a fire-proofed marriage while not also recommending that you get a copy of my book, “Married to Commitment,” in which a prayer partner and I co-authored to share wise counsel on having healthy relationships.

If you’re married, take the necessary steps to fireproof your relationship. And be married to your commitment.

Donald Lee may be contacted by calling (225) 773-2248 or send e-mail correspondence to leedonaldj@gmail.com. He is co-author of the book on relationships, “Married to Commitment. To get a copy of the movie “Fireproof,” visit <http://www.fireproofthemovie.com>.

## Church Announcements

### Mt. Olive Church to honor pastor

The Mt. Olive Baptist Church will hold the fifth anniversary of Rev. Donald Young Sunday, Feb. 16 at 2:30 p.m. The speaker will be Rev. Maurice White, and the Zion Traveler Baptist Church family of Ruston.

Pastor Jeffery Todd and the Macedonia Baptist Church family of Houston will speak during the 10 a.m. morning service. The church is located at 571 Mt. Olive Rd. Grambling.

### Pastor Dyes to celebrate 25 years at St. Matthews

The St. Matthews Baptist Church will celebrate Rev. Johnnie and Marjorie Dyes’s 25th pastoral anniversary Sunday, Feb. 16 at 2:30 p.m. The speaker will be Rev. Boris Braggs, pastor of Mt. Calm Baptist Church in Simsboro and Mt. Pleasant of West Monroe. The church is located in Athens.

### Pilgrim Rest to celebrate the month of February

The Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, pastored by Rev. Brandon Crew will honor Black History Month with several activities. The church is located at 622 Westline Ave. Ruston.

All attending church service on Sunday, Feb 23 are asked to wear red in honor of inventors.

### Ministerial alliance to host C.P. Payne Citywide musical, revival

The Interdenominational Alliance of Ministers will host the Annual C.P. Payne Citywide Musical and Revival starting Sunday, Feb. 23 through Wednesday, Feb. 26 at the Zion Travel Baptist Church, 1201 Martin Luther King, in Ruston.

The Mass Choir will kick off the musical at 6 p.m. and the revival will begin at 7 p.m. each night at Zion Travel, according to Rev. Alejandro Wise, pres., of the alliance and pastor of Zion Hill of Ruston.

The revival speaker will be Rev. Mar-

cus Cosby of Houston and pastor of the Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church. The noonday speakers will include Rev. Clarence Hicks on Monday, Rev. Elliott Henderson on Tuesday and Rev. Maurice White on Wednesday. The services will be held at the Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, 622 W. Line Ave., Ruston.

### Pleasant Grove Church accepting applications

The Pleasant Grove Baptist Church is accepting resumes for a pastor until Friday, Feb. 28. 446 Bowden Road, Ruston (Clay), LA 71245 The ideal candidate will have good moral character and demonstrated leadership experience to shepherd the congregation, truthfully proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, provide administrative oversight and engage in the pastoral care ministries of the church and community.

Interested and qualified? Please send resume to Antono Braggs, 446 Bowden

Road, Ruston (Clay), LA 71245 or [billouis446@gmail.com](mailto:billouis446@gmail.com).

### Mt. Olive Church to hold an annual Scholarship Gala

The Mt. Olive Baptist Church will hold its Annual Scholarship Gala Saturday, March 29, at 6 p.m. This year’s theme is “Giddy Up at Molta Bella” so grab your date and wear your best western attire! A table of eight is \$480 and tickets are \$60 each.

The Scholarship Gala Fundraiser is held to provide Academic Scholarships for graduating high school seniors and other youth ministry activities. This year the church members hope to expand the scholarships for other graduating seniors in the community.

The church is located at 571 Mt. Olive Rd. Grambling and Rev. Donald Young is the pastor.

**Editor’s Note:** If you have a church announcement, please email the information to the [gramblingconnection@gmail.com](mailto:gramblingconnection@gmail.com)

## Area Church Directory

**ASSEMBLY OF GOD**  
**Cathedral of Praise Worship Center**  
- 2877 Highway 33, Ruston  
**First Assembly of God** - 1400 Woodward Ave., Ruston

### BAPTIST

**Alabama**, 16061 Hwy. 151, Arcadia  
**Barnett Springs**, 1601 S. Barnett Springs Rd., Ruston  
**China Grove Missionary**, 406 Vernon St., Ruston  
**Christ Temple**, 7349 Hwy 80. Ruston  
**Church of Restoration**, 285 Main St., Grambling  
**Cook**, 2000 Cooktown Rd, Ruston  
**Corinth**, 4327 Hw 545, Dubach  
**Countyline**, 7426 Hwy. 146, Ruston  
**Dayspring Baptist Ministries**, 3191 South Vienna St, Ruston  
**Emmanuel**, 1200 Farmerville Hwy., Ruston  
**Fellowship**, 6476 Hwy 151, Dubach  
**Fellowship**, 1572 Highway 507 South, Simsboro  
**First**, 117 Oak St., - One block south of Hwy. 80 in Choudrant  
**First**, Hico St., Dubach  
**First**, 200 S. Trenton St., Ruston  
**First**, Simsboro  
**Friendship**, 143 West Sixth Street, Bernice  
**Grace**, 2808 Trenton Ave., Ruston  
**Grace Bible**, 216 Rough Edge Rd., Ruston  
**Greater Pleasant Grove**, 1270 Golf Course Rd., Unionville  
**Greater St. Luke**, 163 St. Luke Church Rd, Arcadia  
**Gummspring**, 3117 Hwy 151, Farmerville  
**Hebron, Love Chapel**, 1525 Sikes St, Ruston  
**Hico**, 653 Hwy. 152, Dubach  
**Hopewell**, 7657 Fellowship Rd., Hwy 151, Dubach  
**Lane Chapel**, 1016 McAllister, Ruston  
**Lanes Chapel**, Hwy. 151 Downsville  
**Liberty Hill**, Simsboro  
**Longstraw**, 1799 Styles, Ranch Rd.,  
**Love Chapel**, 1525 Sikes St, Ruston  
**Macedonia, No. 1**, Rt. 2, Dubach  
**Macedonia, No. 2**, 489 E. Sibley Rd., Choudrant  
**Mineral Springs**, 4599 Hwy 822, Dubach  
**Mount Harmony**, 210 Mt. Harmony Church Rd, Ruston  
**Mount Calm**, 566 Mount Calm Rd., Simsboro  
**Mount Olive**, Grambling

**Mount Olive Outreach**, 2817 S. Service Road W., Ruston  
**Mount Pisgah**, Hwy. 3061, Ruston  
**Mount Sinai**, 2269 Hwy. 145, Choudrant  
**Mount Vernon**, 1356 Hwy. 167 N., Dubach  
**Mount Zion**, 2586 Hwy 150., Grambling  
**Mount Zion No. 2**, 113 California Plant Road, Dubach  
**New Hope**, Choudrant  
**New Hope**, 302 W. Vaughn, Ruston  
**New Liberty Hill**, Hwy. 544, Simsboro  
**New Living Word Ministries**, 1900 W. Barnett Springs, Ruston  
**New Pilgrim Rest, Inc.**, 2697 Elm St., Arcadia  
**New Prospect**, 3438 Hwy. 167 N., Dubach  
**New Prosperity**, 1378 Prosperity Church, Clay  
**New Rocky Valley**, 2155 Martin Luther King Ave., Grambling  
**Northview Missionary**, Highway 33, Ruston  
**Olive Grove**, 3138 Olive Grove Rd, Choudrant  
**Pilgrim Rest**, 622 W. Line Ave., Ruston  
**Pine Grove**, 470 Chandler Rd., Ruston  
**Pleasant Grove**, 1366 Pleasant Grove Road, Choudrant  
**Pleasant Grove**, “The Oasis in the Woods”, 446 Bowden Rd., Ruston  
**Pleasant Hill**, 1127 Mondy Rd, Simsboro  
**Rock Corner & Garden of Prayer**, 824 Rock Corner Rd, Dubach, off Hwy.33, 14 miles north of Ruston  
**Rocky Valley**, Simsboro  
**Solid Rock**, 1511 West California Hwy 80, Ruston  
**Southside**, 3191 South Vienna St., Ruston  
**Springhill**, 727 Dicks Store Rd., Ruston  
**St. David**, Vienna.  
**St. John**, Old Grambling Rd., Ruston.  
**St. Mary**, 1114 Larson St., Ruston.  
**St. Peter**, 404 Longstraw Rd., Ruston  
**St. Rest**, 09 Walker Rd., Choudrant  
**St. Rest**, Hwy. 146 West, Dubach  
**Temple**, 1515 S. Service Rd. W. Ruston  
**True Believers**, 184 CCC Road, Ruston  
**The Springs**, (A ministry of Temple Baptist Church) 1601 S. Barnett Springs Ave., Ruston  
**The Springs.life The Word**, 504 S. Main St., Grambling University - 2856 W. California, Ruston

**Vernon**, 190 Vernon-Eros Road, Ruston  
**Woods Chapel**, 326 Hwy 454, Ruston  
**Zion Hill**, 505 Lee St., Ruston  
**Zion Traveler**, 1201 Martin Luther King Dr, Ruston

### CATHOLIC

**St. Benedict**, 471 Main St., Grambling  
**St. Thomas Aquinas**, 810 Carey Avenue, Ruston

### CHURCH OF CHRIST

**Church of Christ**, 2902 Hwy. 80 West, Ruston  
**Church of Christ**, 146 King St., Grambling  
**Northside**, 1804 N. Trenton St., Ruston  
**Orleans Cir. Church of Christ**, 2103 Orleans Cir., Ruston  
**Ruston**, 2300 W. Woodward Ave., Ruston, [www.rustonchurchofchrist.org](http://www.rustonchurchofchrist.org)

### EPISCOPAL

**Church of the Redeemer**, 504 Tech Dr., Ruston  
**St. Luke’s**, 538 Main St., Grambling

### METHODIST

**Ansley Union**, 328 Ansley Rd, Ruston, located 10 miles south of Ruston off Hwy 167  
**Antioch UMC**, Simsboro  
**Arcadia First UMC**, Arcadia  
**Choudrant UMC**, 125 Pecan St., Choudrant  
**Dubach UMC**, Dubach  
**First UMC**, Arcadia  
**Grace**, 3401 N. Trenton St., Ruston  
**Lewis Temple**, Main St., Grambling  
**Mays Chapel CME**, 615 W. Line Ave., Ruston  
**Memorial UMC**, 9325 Hwy 80, Simsboro.  
**Mt. Mariah UMC** - Salem UMC - 11793 Hwy. 151, Dubach  
**St. Peter AME**, 1104 Arlington St., Ruston.  
**Trinity Methodist**, 1000 Woodward Ave., Ruston  
**Wesley Chapel**, 4330 Hwy. 818, Ruston

### PENTECOSTAL

**Anchor Tabernacle**, Exit 93 from I-20 then South 1/2 mile, Choudrant  
**First Pentecostal**, Corner of Kentucky and Goodwin Ruston  
**King’s Court UPC**, 2401 S. Service Rd. West, Ruston  
**LifePoint Church**, 1018 S. Vienna St., Ruston. [lifepointruston.com](http://lifepointruston.com)

**The Pentecostals**, 2851 Hwy 33 North, Ruston  
**Powerhouse Temple of Christ Apostolic**, 101 Main St., Grambling  
**United Pentecostal**, Dubach  
**Zion Temple Apostolic Faith Deliverance** - Eastern Hills, off Beacon Light Rd., Ruston  
**Voice of Revival Ministry** - 304 W. California St., Ruston

### PRESBYTERIAN

**Alabama (USA)**, 2091 Hwy 145, Choudrant  
**Covenant Reformed**, 2106 Cooktown Rd., Ruston  
**Greenwood**, Lincoln Parish Rd. 181, between Mitcham’s & Hwy. 146, Ruston  
**Ruston (USA)**, 212 N. Bonner St.

### OTHERS

**Abundant Grace Tabernacle**, 3092 Hwy 556, Choudrant  
**Campus Community Worship Center**, 1000 Saratoga St., Ruston  
**Christian L.I.F.E. Church**, 107 Love Ave., Ruston  
**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints**, 205 Woodhaven Rd., Ruston  
**Church of the Living God**, 1438 Hwy. 167 W., Dubach  
**Church of the Nazarene**, 1101 Center St., Ruston  
**Douglas Church**, 1642 Hwy 821, Ruston  
**Church of God in Christ**, 256 Voss Street, Dubach  
**Faith Church**, 1507 Goodwin Road, Ruston  
**Focus Christian Ministries**, Martin Luther King Community Center, 901 Martin Luther King Dr., Ruston  
**Fountain of Praise United Worship Center**, 1394 Hazel St., Arcadia  
**The Gospel**, 108 Sanctuary Rd, Ruston  
**Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church**, 2508 Kavanaugh Road, Ruston  
**Impact Worship Center**, Greenwood Recreation Center, 1306 Cornell Ave, Ruston  
**Ruston Housing Authority Building** 901 Martin Luther King Dr. Ruston.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** If you would like your church information listed, please email the Grambling Connection at [grambliniteconnection@gmail.com](mailto:grambliniteconnection@gmail.com).

# Lifestyle & Wellness

## Charming's Corner

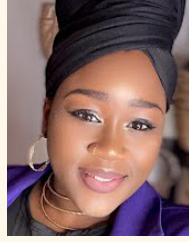
# Energetic Healing: Healing the Root; Stopping the Cycle!

By Charming Davis

**E**nergetic healing is a holistic practice that focuses on restoring balance to the energy body, which is believed to influence a person's physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. It is based on the understanding that the human body has an energetic field (sometimes referred to as the aura or biofield) and energy centers (such as chakras or meridians) that play a vital role in overall health.

### Key Principles of Energetic Healing:

- 1. Energy Flows Through Us:**
  - Every living being has a life force energy that flows through and around the body. This energy is called qi in Chinese medicine, prana in yoga, or simply "life force."
  - When this energy flows freely, the body and mind are in harmony.
- 2. Imbalances Cause Dis-ease:**
  - Blockages, disruptions, or stagnation in this energy flow can manifest as emotional distress, physical illness, or chronic conditions.
  - Emotional trauma, stress, or negative thoughts can create these energetic imbalances.
- 3. Healing the Energy Body Heals the Whole Person:**
  - By addressing imbalances in the energy field, the body's natural ability to heal itself is activated.



Charming Davis

• Energetic healing helps release trapped emotions, old patterns, and stress, which can reduce or even eliminate physical symptoms.

### Types of Energetic

#### Healing:

- 1. Reiki** – A Japanese healing method where practitioners channel universal energy to balance the energy body.
- 2. Chakra Healing** – Focuses on clearing and aligning the seven main energy centers in the body.
- 3. Acupuncture and Acupressure** – Use the meridians to unblock energy flow.
- 4. Sound Healing** – Uses vibrations from sound to shift energy.
- 5. Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT)** – Combines tapping on meridian points with affirmations to release emotional blockages.

#### Benefits of Energetic Healing:

- Releases stress and emotional trauma.
  - Improves clarity, focus, and emotional balance.
  - Relieves chronic pain and physical tension.
  - Promotes better sleep, relaxation, and resilience.
- In essence, energetic healing is

about identifying and healing the root cause of imbalance, often helping people break cycles of trauma, illness, or emotional patterns.

### 1. What is Reiki?

- Reiki (pronounced ray-key) is a Japanese energy healing technique that translates to "universal life force energy."
- It's based on the idea that an unseen energy flows through us, and when this energy is low or blocked, it can lead to emotional or physical imbalances.
- Reiki practitioners channel energy through their hands to balance the energy body and promote healing.

### 2. How Reiki Helps Release Trapped Emotions

- Trapped emotions create energetic blockages, which can manifest as stress, anxiety, or even physical illness.
- During a Reiki session, the practitioner acts as a conduit for universal energy, helping clear these blockages.
- Many clients feel lighter emotionally and notice relief from physical symptoms after Reiki sessions.

### 3. The Process of Reiki Healing

- The practitioner places their hands on or near the client's body in a series of positions.
- Energy is channeled into the energy body, particularly targeting the chakras (energy centers), to restore

harmony.

- Sessions are non-invasive and deeply relaxing, making Reiki a gentle but powerful healing tool.

### 4. Reiki's Role in Breaking Cycles

- Reiki helps people identify and release stored traumas or patterns that may have been unconsciously passed down through generations.
- By healing on an energetic level, individuals can shift emotional and physical cycles, creating space for transformation and long-term wellness.

### 5. Why Reiki Complements Modern Healing

- Reiki doesn't replace medical treatments but works alongside them by addressing the emotional and energetic roots of disease.
  - It can improve mental clarity, reduce pain, and enhance overall well-being.
- "For those seeking personalized guidance and support in their energetic healing journey, consultations with me, Reiki Master Charming Davis are available at Naturally Charming Universe Holistic Wellness Center, located at 311 Main Street, Grambling, LA. These sessions provide a safe and nurturing space to identify and release energetic blockages, paving the way for emotional and physical well-being." Call today to book your consultation! 318-596-9455

# Eating a Balanced Diet

By Doris Marzett, R.D.

If you follow the advice of professional dietitians and eat a balanced diet, you are well on the way to a better life. It is never too late – or too early – to make healthy changes to your diet to help prevent disease, manage your weight, and feel better. Here's why a balanced diet is good for your health.

When we talk about a balanced diet it means choosing a variety of foods from the different food groups – specifically: vegetables and fruits; protein (meat, fish, eggs, beans, soy); dairy (low-fat milk, cheese, yogurt); carbohydrates (starchy foods like rice, pasta, potatoes and bread – preferably wholegrain or wholewheat varieties); and a small quantity of healthy fats such as the unsaturated fat from olive oil. Avoid sugary drinks and foods, and foods with added saturated fat like processed meats, chips, pastries, and pies. Drink plenty of water to keep hydrated and to help your body function better.

It is important to have a balanced diet because it provides your body with every nutrient essential to sustain itself. Furthermore, if you don't have a balanced diet, your body will struggle to work effectively. Listed below is a day of balanced menus and recipes. Enjoy!

### BREAKFAST

**Cheese Toast:** Toast one slice of whole wheat sandwich bread to desired color of brown. While still hot, top with 1 slice pepper jack cheese (You may use any variety of cheese). Return to hot oven about 30 seconds to soften cheese.

**Apple Slices:** Wash apple and dry with paper towel. Cut apple into wedges and remove core.

#### Beverage of choice

### LUNCH

**Turkey Sandwich:** Make one sandwich using -  
2 slices of whole wheat sandwich bread

2 ounces sliced turkey  
1 Tablespoon mayonnaise (or mustard)

#### 6 Baby Carrots

½ cup Cubed Peaches (May be purchased in individual cups.)

#### Beverage of Choice

### DINNER

#### Pork Chops A-glow

4 boneless pork chops,  
4 thin slices onion about 1" thick

¼ cup uncooked rice  
Salt and pepper

1 can whole tomatoes

- Season chops with salt and pepper.
- Brown chops on both sides in

lightly greased hot skillet.

3. Place chops in a baking dish. Top each chop with a slice of onion, 1 tablespoon rice and 1 whole tomato.

4. Add any remaining tomatoes and juice to baking dish. Cover and bake in 350°F oven 1 hour or until tender. Makes 4 servings.

#### Roasted Green Beans

2 pounds fresh green beans, trimmed  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon ground black pepper  
1. Preheat oven to 400°F  
2. Rinse green beans and pat dry with paper towels; spread onto a rimmed baking sheet.

3. Drizzle beans with olive oil, then season with salt and pepper. Use your hands to toss the beans until evenly coated with oil; spread out in a single layer.

4. Roast in oven until beans are crisp-tender, look slightly shriveled, and start to show golden caramelized spots, 15 to 25 minutes.

Peanut Crunch Slaw  
2 cups shredded cabbage

#### Dressing

½ cup finely cut celery  
¼ cup sour cream  
¼ cup mayonnaise  
½ teaspoon salt  
¼ cup salted peanuts, coarsely chopped

2 tablespoon chopped green onion  
2 tablespoon chopped green pepper  
¼ cup chopped cucumber

1. Toss cabbage and celery together, chill.

2. Mix sour cream, mayonnaise, salt, onion, green pepper and cucumber; chill.

3. Just before serving, toss chilled vegetables with dressing.

4. Sprinkle chopped peanuts on top, if desired. Serves 4.

Orange Sherbet  
Beverage of Choice

### SNACK

Cajun Trail Mix  
1 cup dry roasted peanuts

1 teaspoon olive oil  
1/2 cup walnuts

1 teaspoon maple syrup  
1/4 cup sunflower seeds

1 teaspoon garlic powder  
1/4 cup almonds

1 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
1/4 cup (c)raisins

1 teaspoon thyme  
½ teaspoon onion powder

½ teaspoon paprika  
1. Preheat oven to 325°.

2. Place all ingredients except (c) raisins in a large bowl and toss to

combine. Make sure all the nuts have a little seasoning on them. Spread nuts evenly on a baking sheet lined with parchment or a baking stone.

3. Bake for 20 minutes, toss nuts about halfway through roasting and watch them carefully near the end making sure the nuts don't burn. Remove

once nuts are golden brown.

4. Cool completely before adding (c) raisins. Stir mixture together and serve or place in an air-tight container for storage. Make 2 cups.

*NOTE: Any of these nuts may be substituted with any other favorable nuts. The (c) raisins may be omitted.*

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## Arts &amp; Culture

## Famous Speeches and Poems By Black Authors

**"Ain't I a Woman?"**  
By Sojourner Truth

"Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the Negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman?

Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman?

I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman?

I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? Intellect? That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or Negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then, that little man in black there, he says women

can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them. 'Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say."



Maya Angelou

**And Still I Rise**  
By Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?  
Why are you beset with gloom?  
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells  
Pumping in my living room.  
Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,  
Weakened by my soulful cries?  
Does my haughtiness offend you?  
Don't you take it awful hard  
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines  
Diggin' in my own backyard.  
You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,

You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.  
Does my sexiness upset you?  
Does it come as a surprise  
That I dance like I've got diamonds  
At the meeting of my thighs?  
Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
I rise  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.  
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I rise  
I rise  
I rise.

**Our Deepest Fear**  
(Written by Marianne Williamson but made famous by Nelson Mandela)

Nelson Mandela

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, "Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?" Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does

not serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.



Sojourner Truth

**"I Have A Dream" (Full text)**  
By Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check -- a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until



Martin Luther King, Jr.

there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

As we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied, as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can

never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "For Whites Only". We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair. I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where

they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual,

"Free at last!

Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"



# Arts & Culture

Did You Know?

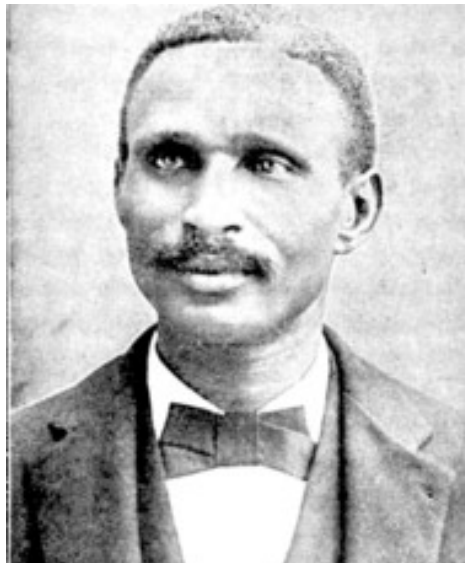
## Gibbsland Had a Black College

Staff Report

Coleman College (1887–1937; and 1943–1950s), formerly Coleman Academy, was a segregated African American secondary school founded in Gibbsland, Louisiana and incorporated in 1887. It was the first secondary school for Black students in northern Louisiana. It was founded by Oliver Lewis Coleman. From 1943 to 1950s, the school relocated to Shreveport, before its closure.

The school was founded by Oliver Lewis Coleman (commonly known as O. L. Coleman), an African American educator and graduate of Alcorn State University. He was from Livingston, Mississippi.

The school first opened in 1887 with 10 students and was hosted in a church building, at the time there was no other secondary school for Black students in north Louisiana. It was affiliated with the Baptist Church and supported by the American Baptist Home Mission Society. The institution produced primarily teachers and preachers; and in the early years had class sizes at around eight students.



O.L. Coleman

In 1889, C. R. Moore donated 10 acres (4.0 ha) of land and the school was moved to the site and occupied a frame building (the same location of present-day Gibbsland-Coleman High School. In 1908, a brick school building was created.



Coleman College in Gibbsland

Coleman College at its peak owned some 100 acres (40 ha), of which ten were devoted to educational purposes. There were eight buildings which included classrooms, an auditorium, dormitories, and an administrative building. The college offered a choir, glee club, and intercollegiate athletics. Nicknamed the Coleman Bulldogs, Coleman College's chief athletic rival was the historically Black Grambling College Tigers in Grambling of Lincoln Parish, subsequently, Grambling State University. Enrollment at Coleman reached as high as four hundred in some years.

Coleman died on March 8, 1927, of injuries sustained in an automobile accident in Jackson, Mississippi. After his

death, his son Monroe McVicker Coleman served as president from 1927 to 1934; followed by Roy Mayfield as president from 1934 to 1937.

The college closed in Gibbsland in 1937 because of the Great Depression. The site of the school in Gibbsland was purchased by the Bienville School District and renamed "Gibbsland Colored High School" (later known as Coleman High School, and then Gibbsland-Coleman High School).

### Shreveport, Louisiana

Later in 1943, Coleman College reopened under the leadership of college president J. L. Crossley for another decade in Shreveport. Decreased enrollment caused the school to close once again in the mid-1950s.

Among its graduates were the first president of Southern University in Baton Rouge, Joseph Samuel Clark, and Ada Bell Lewis Coleman. Ada Coleman was the mother of Mildred Coleman Marks, Geraldine Coleman Gaillard, and the deceased McVicker Monroe Coleman, Jr., and Georgia Coleman McClaron.

## Dr. Cordara Harper Named to Yamaha's 40 Under 40 List for Music Education Excellence

GRAMBLING, La. – Dr. Cordara Harper, a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Music Education and Choir Director at Grambling State University, has been named to Yamaha's prestigious 2025 "40 Under 40" Music Education Excellence list. Recognized for his innovation, leadership, and dedication to student success, Dr. Harper stands as the only Black male educator from an HBCU to receive this honor.

With Black men comprising just 2-3% of college and university profes-



Dr. Cordara Harper

conducting, music education, and musicology, shaping the next generation of musicians and educators. His lead-

ership extends beyond the classroom as an active member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity of America. This recognition from Yamaha adds to an already distinguished year for Dr. Harper. He and his close colleague, Prof. Coty Raven Morris, were recently Grammy-nominated music educators, further underscoring their influence on the field. For aspiring educators, Dr. Harper offers three key pieces of advice:

Be a source of inspiration for all you

encounter.

Foster an environment where everyone feels seen, heard, valued, and welcomed.

Never stop learning and seek mentorship at every stage of your journey.

Dr. Harper's commitment to student development and excellence in music education continues to set the bar for future educators and musicians. His impact resonates not only within Grambling State but also across the broader landscape of music education.

## Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery: A Director's Perspective

By Lena Claybon

Dr. Neal Herbert directs Shay Youngblood's "Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery" which opens on February 26 at the Floyd L. Sandals Theatre. "Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery" tells the story of Daughter, a young black woman abandoned by her mother in the 1950s, and the community of women who adopted Daughter and taught her what it means to be a woman during the summer of her 13th birthday.

Herbert, who is the current Assistant Director of Theatre at GSU, has worked as a director and dramaturg for the past 25 years. He received his MA in Philosophy in 2008, and was awarded his PhD in Theatre History and Historiography under the direction of Dr Alan Sikes and Dr John Fletcher in 2016.

Herbert had the privilege of serving as Program Head of McKinley Senior High School's Theatre Program for 6 years. He has previously taught at LSU, Baton Rouge Community College, McNeese State University, and Southern Univer-



Dr. Neal Herbert

ity of Baton Rouge. In commenting on his role of Director of the play, he said, "I think the thing about Shay Youngblood's *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery* that stands out most to me is the way the play centers the experiences of black women, both historicizing and humanizing the struggles of these women during the 20th Century. We get an inside look at the lessons these women — the village it takes to raise her -- impart to her the summer she gets her first period."

According to Herbert, the play can be shown to everyone in the community no matter how young or old. "Parents in our community don't need to worry about explicit language or sensational violence - *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery* is family friendly, and lets us see the found families that surround all children." Herbert is the first to admit, the

play's theme centers more around his cast's experiences than his own. "As a white male theatre artist, I've found myself embracing a different type of collaboration than I have for many of my previous productions. The story of *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery* isn't my story — it's my cast's histories and lives, and I've worked to center their experiences as we collaborate on the creation of this play. I've asked my cast to let me know if anything we're doing feels false or untrue to their lives — and when I fall short, I defer to their expertise and lived experiences."

Herbert hopes the play will bring people to the theatre. "We live in interesting times, times of great change and uncertainty. I hope *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery* brings people together, that my cast's and audiences' experiences on stage feel true. I'm humbled to be a part of this process, and love that I'm helping my community stage its stories and histories."

For Box Office times and dates, please call 318-274-2201.



### Kinnidy Lucas.

Actor, Daughter. A Junior majoring in Theatre. Kinnidy was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana. SMOM marks Kinnidy's fourth production with the Department of Visual and Performing Arts. Kinnidy dedicates her work on this production to the women in her family who made her the woman she is today.



### Shymrri McDonald.

Actor, Big Mama. A proud citizen of New Orleans, Louisiana Shymrri is a Junior majoring in Broadcast Journalism with a minor in Theatre. An avid photographer, she owns and maintains her own photography business. Shot By Shym. SMOM is Shymrri's third production with the Department of Visual and Performing Arts. This one's for her own Big Mama.



### Areona Richardson.

Actor, Aunt Mae. Hailing from Dallas, Texas, Areona is a Junior Majoring in Theatre with a concentration in Dance. SMOM marks her third production with the Department of Visual and Performing Arts. Areona would like to dedicate her performances to all of the women of her family who have supported her through thick and thin.



### Ephinité Hardy.

Actor, Miss Mary/Miss Tom. A senior Theatre Major and current president of the Floyd L. Sandals Theatre Guild. Ephinité hails from north Louisiana. An experienced performer and minister in training, Ephinité would like to dedicate this performance to God.

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# Sports

## GSU baseball team receives rings, prepare for new season

By Joice M. Dunn

Davin Pierre, Grambling State University head baseball coach, could hardly contain his excitement of awarding [championship] rings to his 2024 South Western Athletic Conference (SWAC) team.

To pinch hit, Coach Pierre called on his right-hand woman (his wife) to assist. Ashley Pierrre stepped up to the plate and led some of the team members in a few playful games of distraction. Because every assistant needs an assistant, she called into rotation, Yumeaka Washington and her husband, Ronald, owners of Paradise Funeral Homes. She thanked the Washingtons for supporting the Grambling Team in every way. Looking over the room, Ashley also thanked the players' parents that made an appearance and supported the team as well as others, such as Dr. Grace Tatum and Rosalind Russell, who's always seen in the stands showing support.

Stepping back up to the plate, Coach Pierre couldn't hold out any longer. Calling the 2025 season team captains to the front, he told the story of how they were chosen by their teammates.

"I'm humbled and honored to have been chosen as captain. This program has shaped me to be a great follower first. It means a lot to be chosen by my brothers to lead. It's a true honor," Aries Gardner humbly said.

Gardner was Redshirted as a freshman from Detroit. He graduated in May of 2024 with a degree in business management and returned as a graduate student with a concentration in sports administration.

Randy Reyes, graduate student – sports information, said, "Being chosen as captain by my teammates and brothers is an honor. Through adversity, I have developed leadership skills that the team has trusted me to lead them to a



Team Members open boxes revealing their championship rings.



Coach Pierre, Coach Ellis and Assistant showing off their rings.

championship. I am beyond excited for what's to come this year and ready to go."

Coach Pierre presented the young men with boxes, each with their names on them, and asked them to open the boxes.

"Designing this ring, I really wanted it to mean something to the players. So, the 'Hell Baby, We Grambling' and the quote on the inside of the ring where it

talks about having the G in your heart', those things are sentimental to me and the guys. So, this ring is absolutely beautiful but more importantly it's something more because of the details and they will never forget it," Coach Pierre explained.

James Cooper, manager for the New York Yankee's Minor League organization, stepped up to the Mond to give words of encouragement to the team for the season to come. He asked the group to reflect on the best moment they had in baseball.

"One of the best days I had in baseball was watching the GSU Tigers Baseball Team play for the championship when I was in Juvenile, Florida."

The former GSU coach reminded the players that their best days weren't reached alone. "Sometimes the best days are reached because of you and sometimes the days are great because of the guy next to you or a parent that helped

you or the alumni."

Cooper said, "It's a new year, a new team, a new competition, it will be a new mountain to climb, but just like you conquered that thing on last year, you will get the chance to conquer it again this year. You are not fighting for the championship, you are fighting to repeat. When people favor you, there's a big target on your back."

He reminded the team that it was okay to be a paper champion when the season starts, but at the end of the season, BE the champion.

The final advice was brought home by the second head baseball coach of Grambling and Hall of Fame inductee, Wilbert Ellis. "Thank You Jesus", was his opening remarks.

"It takes a team to win a championship, it's no individual ball player, it's a team. You don't have an easy road anymore, because everybody wants to beat you. You are the world champions in the SWAC and everybody is saying, 'If we can beat Grambling, the champions, Coach Pierre's team, we can be at the top next year.' I want to say, 'Hell baby that's not true.'" Coach Ellis said.

"Don't ask somebody to do something for you that you can't do for yourself", he said. "You have to have the will to win, you must believe that you can beat the team that you're going to play." Coach wrapped up by saying, "Wake up Grambling, wake up. Time to win another one, baby. Hell, you are Grambling, you got to do it."

"We are excited about the season. We understand that the expectation levels are high, and we are excited about the journey to meet them. As always, we will play a very competitive schedule and we look forward to playing some good non-conference opponents such as LSU, Arkansas, LA Tech and ULM. All these teams that were in the NCAA regional last year," said Coach Pierre.



# Grambling State University 2025 TIGER BASEBALL SCHEDULE

### FEBRUARY

#### MLB HBCU Classic

14 Friday	Jackson St. University	Houston, Tx	11am
15 Saturday	Southern University	Houston, Tx	3pm
16 Sunday	Alabama A&M	Houston, Tx	11am
18 Tuesday	University of Louisiana at Monroe	Monroe, La	6pm

#### MLB Dawson Classic

21 Friday	Alabama St. University (MLB Network)	Vero Beach, FL	4pm
22 Saturday	Alabama A&M	Vero Beach, FL	12pm
23 Sunday	Prairie View A&M	Vero Beach, FL	10am
25 Tuesday	University of Arkansas	Fayetteville, AR	3pm
28 Friday	Texas Southern	Grambling, La	6pm

### MARCH

1 Saturday	Texas Southern University (DH)	Grambling, La	1pm
4 Tuesday	Wiley College	Grambling, La	6pm
5 Wednesday	UIW	Grambling, La	6pm
7 Friday	University of Houston	Houston, Tx	6:30pm
8 Saturday	University of Houston	Houston, Tx	6:30pm
9 Sunday	University of Houston	Houston, Tx	1pm
11 Tuesday	Northwestern St.	Natchitoches, La	6pm
14 Friday	Alabama A&M	Huntsville, AL	6pm
15 Saturday	Alabama A&M	Huntsville, AL	3pm
16 Sunday	Alabama A&M	Huntsville, AL	1pm
18 Tuesday	Northwestern St.	Grambling, LA	6pm
21 Friday	Texas Southern University	Grambling, LA	6pm
22 Saturday	Texas Southern University	Grambling, LA	3pm
23 Sunday	Texas Southern University	Grambling, LA	1pm
25 Tuesday	Louisiana Tech University	Ruston, La	6:30pm
28 Friday	Jackson St. University	Jackson, MS	6pm
29 Saturday	Jackson St. University	Jackson, MS	3pm
30 Sunday	Jackson St. University	Jackson, MS	1pm

### APRIL

1 Tuesday	University of Arkansas	Little Rock, AR	6pm
4 Friday	Southern University	Baton Rouge, La	6pm
5 Saturday	Southern University	Baton Rouge, La	3pm
6 Sunday	Southern University	Baton Rouge, La	1pm
8 Tuesday	Wiley College	Grambling, LA	6pm
11 Friday	Prairie View A&M University	Cypress, Tx	3pm
12 Saturday	Prairie View A&M University	Cypress, Tx	2pm
13 Sunday	Prairie View A&M University	Cypress, Tx	1pm
17 Thursday (Easter)	Alcorn State University	Grambling, LA	6pm
18 Friday	Alcorn State University	Grambling, LA	6pm
19 Saturday	Alcorn State University	Grambling, LA	3pm
22 Tuesday	University of Louisiana	Lafayette, LA	6pm
25 Friday	Florida A&M	Tallahassee, FL	6pm
26 Saturday	Florida A&M	Tallahassee, FL	3pm
27 Sunday	Florida A&M	Tallahassee, FL	1pm
29 Tuesday	Stephen F. Austin	Grambling, La	6:00pm

### MAY

2 Friday	University of Arkansas Pine Bluff	Grambling, La	6pm
3 Saturday	University of Arkansas Pine Bluff	Grambling, La	3pm
4 Sunday	University of Arkansas Pine Bluff	Grambling, La	1pm
6 Tuesday	Louisiana State University	Baton Rouge, La	6:00pm
9 Friday	Bethune Cookman University	Grambling, LA	6pm
10 Saturday	Bethune Cookman University	Grambling, LA	3pm
11 Sunday (Senior Day)	Bethune Cookman University	Grambling, LA	1pm
15 Thursday	Mississippi Valley St. University	Itta Bena, MS	3pm
16 Friday	Mississippi Valley St. University	Itta Bena, MS	2pm
17 Saturday	Mississippi Valley St. University	Itta Bena, MS	1pm
21-25 Wed- Sun	SWAC Tournament	Birmingham, AL	TBA

Head Coach Davin Pierre (318) 274-2416 [pierred@gram.edu](mailto:pierred@gram.edu)  
 Assist. Coach Perez Knowles  
 Grad. Assistant Lorenzo Petersen  
 Baseball Manager Brandon Jackson

# Sports

## '25 GRAMBLING STATE TIGERS FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

	9.6	Columbus, OH
	9.13	* Grambling, LA
	9.20	* Grambling, LA
	9.27	STATE FAIR CLASSIC Dallas, TX
	10.11	* HOMECOMING Grambling, LA
	10.18	Pine Bluff, AR
	10.25	HBCU CLASSIC Las Vegas, NV
	11.1	* Grambling, LA
	11.8	* Grambling, LA
	11.15	Lorman, MS
	11.29	BAYOU CLASSIC New Orleans, LA * HOME GAMES

# Grambling State Announces 2025 Football Schedule

**Grambling Athletics**  
(GRAMBLING, La. | The Grambling State University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics announced its 2025 football schedule which features six games in the state of Louisiana, five home games, three neutral site matchups and one game versus an FBS powerhouse.

GSU opens the season in Columbus, Ohio versus the defending College Football National Champions Ohio State on Sept. 6.

The Tigers return to the state of Louisiana for back-to-back home games at Eddie G. Robinson Memorial Stadium. GSU's home opener is set for Sept. 13 versus Kentucky State and East Texas A&M will the Tigers a visit on Sept. 20.

Grambling State closes the month of September in the Lone Star State when the Tigers face Prairie View A&M in the State Fair Classic at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas, Texas. That game is also the SWAC opener for GSU.

Homecoming is scheduled for Oct. 11 when the Tigers welcome Texas Southern to town.

On Oct. 18, the G-Men travel to Pine Bluff, Ark. to take on Arkansas-Pine Bluff before heading out west to face Jackson State in the Inaugural Las Vegas HBCU Classic on Oct. 25 at Allegiant Stadium.

Grambling State opens the month on November with a pair of home games versus Alabama A&M on Nov. 1 and Bethune-Cookman on Nov. 8. The game versus BCU will be Senior Day for the Tigers.

On Nov. 15, GSU heads to Lorman, Miss. for a battle with Alcorn State.

The 52nd Bayou Classic versus Southern will be played on Nov. 29th at the Caesars Superdome

Information on season tickets will be announced at later date, but fans can stay updated by visiting gsutigers.com.

## Gibbs and Broussard Earn Preseason All-SWAC Honors for Grambling State Softball

**By Leon Mitchell**  
GSU Athletic Communications

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. | The Grambling State University softball team had two student-athletes earn preseason All-Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) honors on Monday morning.

Erin Gibbs and Kamryn Broussard earned Second Team honors.

Junior pitcher Erin Gibbs was a key contributor for the Tigers throughout the season. Gibbs appeared in 16 games, starting 13, and logged 73.1 innings pitched. She finished with a 4-8 record and a 4.54 ERA, showcasing her durability and determination in the circle. Gibbs struck out 30 batters while walking 16, and she held opposing hitters to a .293 batting average.

Sophomore outfielder Kamryn Broussard was a consistent force for Grambling State, excelling both offensively and defensively. At the plate, Broussard posted a .322 batting average on the season. She tallied 37 hits, including nine doubles and three triples, while driving in 11 runs and scoring 22.

Defensively, Broussard was nearly flawless, recording 65 putouts and 64 assists with just one error in 130 total chances, good for a 1.000 fielding percentage. Her versatility and reliability in the field solidified her as one of the most well-rounded players in the conference.

Grambling State, under the leadership of head coach Nakeya Hall, is coming off a 2024 season in which the Tigers posted a 17-30 overall record and an 8-16 mark in SWAC play. Looking ahead to the upcoming season, they are projected to finish fourth in the SWAC West.

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## Grambling State in 77-67 Win Over Alabama State

MONTGOMERY, Ala. | Grambling State guard Kintavious Dozier scored a season-high 30 points to lead Grambling State to a 77-67 win over Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) foe Alabama State at the Dunn-Oliver Acadome on Saturday afternoon.

Dozier was a marksman from behind the arc, scoring 21 of his points from three-point range. He went 9-for-15 from field and 7-of-11 from deep. He added three rebounds and steal to his tally.

Mikale Stevenson was also big on the

offensive end for the Tigers, contributing 15 points with four assists, three boards and two steals.

PJ Eason and Antwan Burnett were strong on the glass, both grabbing 10 rebounds apiece in the victory.

Grambling State (7-16 overall, 4-6 SWAC) played from in front for much of game, having a response for every Alabama State run.

Leading 20-18 with 7:25 remaining until halftime, the Tigers began to put pressure on ASU (9-14, 5-5). Dozier knocked down 3-pointer to give GSU a 23-18 cushion. Emeka Nnaji followed that with a transition dunk to make it 25-18.

Grambling State led 38-28 at halftime.



GSU Men vs. Alabama

After the Tigers stretched its lead to 43-30 with 16:48 on the left in the game, ASU used an 11-4 run to cut the lead to 47-41. GSU quickly extinguished that run, using a 9-1 spurt, punctuated by another triple from Dozier, to go up 56-42 with 11:19 to go.

Grambling State snagged its largest lead of the game, 65-48, on a layup by Nnaji at the 7:13 mark.

The Hornets did their best to try to keep pace but couldn't close the gap to

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**“Changing of The Guards”**

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