

THE GRAMBLING★CONNECTION

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CBCF’s Executive Order Tracker, Understanding What’s at Stake for Black America provides real-time updates on legal developments and their impact

(Black PR Wire) [Washington, D.C.] —

The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF) proudly announces the launch of CBCF Executive Order Tracker: Understanding What’s at Stake for Black America. Developed by CBCF’s Center for Policy Analysis and Research, this essential tool equips Black communities, researchers, and stakeholders with real-time updates and comprehensive insights into executive orders that shape our daily lives. The platform’s unique focus highlights how these orders impact critical issues within Black communities, including education equity, healthcare access, housing stability, economic opportunity, and criminal justice reform. This launch comes at a pivotal moment, as Americans witnessed an unprecedented 36 executive orders issued within a single week — many of which threaten to dismantle key protections and reverse progress for Black Americans.

Executive orders enable presidents to bypass Congress and enact policy with immediate, far-reaching effects. Although legislative bodies and the courts can act as checks on executive power, communities must stay engaged. CBCF’s tracker bridges this gap, arming users with timely updates and contextual analysis to navigate policy shifts.

“The Executive Orders tracking platform is more than just a tool — it’s a lifeline for communities seeking to understand and influence the policies that affect them most,” says Dr. Jonathan Cox, Vice President, Center for Policy and Research at CBCF. “What makes this platform invaluable is its focus on how specific executive orders impact Black communities, who are often the hardest hit by policy rollbacks and swift executive changes. By translating complex policy language into actionable knowledge, we empower individuals and organizations to advocate for meaningful change with confidence and clarity.”

The tracker features interactive tools that break down complex policy information, transforming dense legal language into clear, digestible insights. This makes it easier for all users to grasp the real-world effects of executive actions. It also captures the responses of Congressional Black Caucus Members to newly issued executive orders, providing timely insights into their perspectives.

By turning knowledge into action, the CBCF Executive Order Tracker ensures that Black voices remain at the forefront of policy discussions and advocacy efforts.

For more information and to access the Executive Orders tracking platform, please visit cbcfinc.org.

Executive Orders in Effect and Their Impact on Black Americans

According to the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s website under the CBCF Executive Order Tracker, here are the Executive Orders that are currently in effect and the impact they are having or will have on Black Americans:

Expanding Educational Freedom and Opportunity for Families

**In effect, no legal challenges pending*

This executive order expands school choice programs by encouraging States to use federal funds to support K-12 educational choice initiatives.

Impact On Black Americans

While school choice holds the promise of improving educational outcomes for Black students, it also carries significant risks. Without policies in place to ensure equity, adequate funding, and diversity, school choice could further entrench educational disparities rather than alleviate them.

Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling

**In effect, no legal challenges pending*

The executive order prohibits the teaching of specific ideologies deemed divisive or politically motivated. The order argues that public school curricula should avoid promoting concepts such as systemic racism and “gender ideology.”

Impact on Black Americans

This order restricts discussions on systemic racism and related concepts which would limit comprehensive Black history education. Long-term implications of this order include reproducing implicit biases for generations and limiting capacities to create an equal and just society that addresses systemic racism.

Restoring America’s Fighting Force

**In effect, no legal challenges pending*

This executive order abolishes all diversity, equity, and

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Hall Out, Simmons and Davison In at Lincoln Prep

Staff Report

After it was announced last week that Coach Glen Hall was out as Football Coach at Lincoln Prep, Johnny Simmons has been selected as Interim Athletic Director and Chaunce Davison as Interim Head Football Coach of Lincoln Preparatory School.

Simmons is in his third year at Lincoln Prep as an assistant basketball coach/special education teacher. Outside of his teaching duties, he has been involved in mentoring, game scheduling, and many aspects of fundraising.

Coach Davison has served as an Assistant Football Coach since returning to Lincoln Prep in 2016. Davison is a dedicated and experienced football coach with deep roots in the Grambling community. A graduate of Grambling High School, where he played from 1994 to 1997 under the guidance of Coach Greg Williams, Davison’s passion for the sport and his hometown runs strong.



C. Davison

“Coach Simmons’ extensive background in player development, recruiting, and program management will be instrumental in advancing our athletic department, ensuring our student-athletes have the resources and mentorship needed to thrive. His proven leadership at both the high school and collegiate levels speaks volumes about his ability to foster excellence in sports and academics.

Coach Davison’s unwavering commitment to Lincoln Prep and his ability to cultivate talent and discipline within our football program make him an exceptional choice to lead our team. His years

of experience, strategic mindset, and devotion to our student-athletes will undoubtedly propel our football program to new heights.”

Dr. Washington extended congratulations to Simmons and Davison—“We are confident that your leadership will leave a lasting impact on our school and our student-athletes for years to come.”

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Dr. Washington extended congratulations to Simmons and Davison—“We are confident that your leadership will leave a lasting impact on our school and our student-athletes for years to come.”

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Opinion

Open Letter To The Grambling Community

By Crystal Washington, Ed.D.

Acting CEO/Executive Director of Lincoln Preparatory School

Greetings,
I am writing to inform the community about recent position changes within our school due to necessary budget cuts. As always, our priority remains providing a high-quality education for our students while making difficult financial decisions to

ensure long-term stability.
We are indebted to Coach Hall's impact as the Chief Operations Officer/Dean of Students/Athletic Director/Head Football Coach and are incredibly proud of the young men who have matriculated through his football program over the years. However, in response to budget constraints, we have carefully evaluated our resources to protect core educational programs and student services.

While these adjustments have led to changes in staffing, we are working to minimize the direct impact on teachers and instructional programs. Transparency has been central to this process, and we are committed to keeping the community informed about the financial realities we face and the reasoning behind these decisions.
We understand that these changes affect many individuals. We welcome

input as we navigate these challenges together and remain dedicated to ensuring the best possible outcomes for our students and staff.
Thank you for your continued support and engagement in our Lincoln Prep's future.
Crystal Washington, Ed.D., MBA is serving as Acting CEO/Executive Director of Lincoln Preparatory School. She may be contacted by calling 318.242.8788.

American Constitution: remarkable, but unfair

By Bobby Rabon

The American Constitution is a remarkable well researched document that is to be envied for its alleged intent of freedom and justice for all. The original document and the amendments are remarkable achievements and are deserving of accolades accounted to them and is reflexive of the times in which it was written. People with pigmentation in their skin and women were not considered worthy of the stated aims of the document with the consequent exclusion or their concerns addressed in the policies that were created to enhance the aim of the document. The exclusion of that segment of the population allowed for the creation of an unjust society where the aim of the document did not anticipate or allow for the needs and wants of the excluded groups of people of color and women with the consequent



Bobby Rabon

creation of system of the laws and customs that disadvantaged the displaced group and favored the other groups.
As a consequence of exclusion, customs and laws were created that were biased toward the neglected, disavowed minorities of the color and adversely impacted the perceptions of good law-abiding persons who abide by the laws and customs of the established society. Misrepresentations of the stated words of the constitution allowed for the creation of laws and regulations without consideration of the impact on the minority excluded voices. The exclusions of minority cultures created separate and unequal segments of the population which continue until the present.
The words of the original docu-

ment, if interpreted literally, allows America to boast of its fairness of opportunity and equal legal opportunities and that is the propaganda of American ideals. The problems with the document became apparent when its application was attempted. "All men are created equal" did not refer to people of color or women. That statement alone, denied Blacks and women the right of equal treatment under the law and justified the rationale for other restrictive laws and customs relative to people of color.
Denial of the history of certain aspects of the treatment of citizens and refusal to acknowledge the misrepresentations of the Constitution has [perpetuated] the rationale for the unequal treatment of certain citizens and the propaganda that America is the beacon of light to which we should all aspire. Until we acknowledge our history and reconcile that it happened

and affected our existence, a cloud of misunderstanding will persist. Accurate exposure to our history will free us of the ghost of the past and allow us to be united as never before.
The fact that your great-grandparent may have held my great-grandparent as a slave, has no impact on you as an individual and should not impact our relationship as human beings. The impact that the misrepresentations of the words of the Constitution has on me today has an impact on both you and me. Yours was advantaged and mine was disadvantaged and that created a vast gulf in our potential for realization of the perceived American Dream. The system that created the disadvantage should also be the system that begins to rectify the system to mitigate the vast differences of community assets.
Bobby Rabon is a Grambling College graduate and a retired educator.

News

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inclusion (DEI) offices and initiatives within the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard, banning race- and sex-based preferences in hiring, training, and military education. It also mandates internal reviews and reporting deadlines to ensure compliance with a merit-based, race-neutral military structure while prohibiting the teaching of "divisive" and DEI-related concepts.
Impact on Black Americans
This order has led to attacks on Black history and funding cuts for Black businesses. Federal agencies like the State Department have archived or deactivated DEI webpages and resources and cancelled Black History Month celebrations. Target, a high profile company in the private sector, ended its Racial Equity Action and Change (REACH) initiative, under which it pledged to invest over \$2 billion with Black-owned businesses by the end of 2025.
Restoring Freedom of Speech and Ending Federal Censorship
*In effect, no legal challenges pending
This executive order rolls back previous commitments and attempts at managing hate speech, "misinformation," and "disinformation" on online platforms.
Impact on Black Americans
The banning of content moderation policies impacts Black communities in several ways, including negative public health outcomes and decreased political engagement.

Restoring the Death Penalty and Protecting Public Safety
*In effect, no legal challenges pending
This executive order directs the Attorney General to resume federal executions and encourage State attorneys general and district attorneys to bring State capital charges for all capital crimes. The order also outlines the Trump Administration's intention to overturn the Supreme Court precedents that limit the use of capital punishment.
Impact on Black Americans
This order puts Black Americans at greater risk of facing fatal consequences at the hands of the justice system. The National Registry of Exonerations reported in 2017 that innocent Black people are seven times more likely to be wrongfully convicted of murder than innocent white people.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Get Informed
Stay up to date with our research on the latest executive orders and their impacts, read our Project 2025 fact sheet, explore our Black Civic Engagement Hub, and check back here regularly for updates.

2. Share the Tracker
Help ensure your network understands what's at stake.

3. Call Your Representatives
Demand that your representatives oppose harmful policies and support legislation that protects your rights.

4. Attend Town Halls & Community Meetings
Ask local and federal leaders how they plan to respond, and how they will center the needs of your communities.

5. Participate in Rallies & Protests
Show up in solidarity with movements resisting unjust policies or advocating for positive change.

6. Register & Mobilize Voters
Ensure your community is registered and ready to vote in local and national elections.

Together, we can push back against harmful executive orders and demand a future where Black communities are protected, empowered, and prioritized in policymaking.

Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service
*In effect, no legal challenges pending
This executive order establishes a Federal Hiring Plan to be implemented by all federal agencies, departments, and commissions that overturns diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) recruitment efforts in the federal government and requires federal workers in nonpartisan departments to "faithfully serve the Executive Branch."
Impact on Black Americans
This order marks the first time in 60 years where there are no intentional efforts to address racism in the federal government, which will have a significant impact on Black Americans.



Ending Radical And Wasteful Government DEI Programs And Preferencing
*In effect, legal challenges pending
This executive order mandates that all federal agencies, department, and commission heads eliminate all environmental justice and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) positions and offices by March 20, 2025.
Impact on Black Americans
This order has not only eliminated federal jobs for Black workers but has also stopped the recruitment efforts that have created a diverse federal workforce.
Withdrawing the United States from the World Health Organization
*In effect, no legal challenges pending
This executive order withdraws the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO), revoking prior commitments and halting all financial support and personnel involvement. It also mandates the identification of alternative global health partners and requires the revision of U.S. health security policies.
Impact on Black Americans
The U.S. withdrawal from the WHO could disproportionately impact Black communities by limiting access to global health resources, disease surveillance, and public health initiatives that address racial health disparities. The WHO plays a vital role in shaping maternal and infant health guidelines, combating infectious diseases, and coordinating vaccine

development—areas where Black communities already face systemic inequities. Without the WHO's support, gaps in research, reduced disease tracking, and weakened public health infrastructure could worsen health outcomes.
Unleashing American Energy
*In effect, pending legal challenges
This executive order accelerates fossil fuel production by rolling back environmental regulations, eliminating clean energy mandates, and prioritizing oil, gas, and natural resource development on federal lands and waters. It also dismantles environmental justice initiatives and reduces federal support for renewable energy, shifting national policy toward fossil fuel dominance.
Impact on Black Americans
The rollback of environmental justice protections and clean energy initiatives further exacerbates systemic inequities, prioritizing fossil fuel industries over frontline communities. Limiting renewable energy growth also restricts economic opportunities for Black workers. Without policies that balance energy security with environmental justice, these communities risk bearing the greatest burden of pollution, climate disasters, and long-term economic consequences.
The fight for justice requires all of us to stay informed, take action, and hold our leaders accountable. Here's how you can push back against harmful executive orders and advocate for policies that protect our communities:

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Community

The role of a Female Minister in the church

By Joice M. Dunn

Rita Jefferson, a native of Monroe, Louisiana, is the middle child of five girls, who grew up Roman Catholic in a devout Italian Catholic family.

When the new priest married her husband Lee Jefferson, she started attending the Episcopal Church with him. “I felt I was where I needed to be spiritually. After 15 years, Lee felt a call to ministry and entered the discernment process with the Bishop. “He was very dyslexic and really struggled with reading, so I registered in the classes with him to help him with reading,” she said.

“My call to ministry came while working with my husband, Lee, on his discernment. We completed the studies together and he was ordained in 2019 and served St. Luke’s Chapel in Grambling, part time till his death in 2021.

One week before her ordination to the Transitional Diaconate, Lee suffered a brain bleed and it was discovered that he had six brain tumors. He was rushed to Shreveport and had emergency brain surgery the next day which took most of his sight. Jefferson wasn’t ordained as planned and five months later, she lost her husband to Melanoma of the brain.

“I wasn’t sure if I would continue my journey but did after some grieving and soul searching took place. I was ordained to the Priesthood in 2021, three days before my 65th birthday in Monroe. I was sent to St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Monroe one month later,” recalled Jefferson.

“St. Luke’s Chapel in Grambling was added to my care in January of 2024



Pictured from left: Kathryn Newman, Gloria Moore, Beatrice Tatem, The Reverend Thomas Nsubuga, The RT. Reverend Rita Jefferson, Ghi Green, Grace Tatem, Marie Jo Green and Erinah Nsubuga

and I have really enjoyed serving both churches. I am the Vicar at St. Luke’s Chapel and Priest-in-Residence of St. Thomas on the Bayou Episcopal Church in Monroe. St. Luke’s is the same church my husband was assigned. I did not attend with him because I was in training under Fr. Whit Stodghill at St. Alban’s in Monroe,” explained Jefferson.

“I am enjoying getting to know the people of Grambling and look forward to spending time with this community,” she said.

Jefferson said her call to the minis-

try gives her the opportunity to connect with people and to assist them on their journey. She loves working with children helping them find their faith and teaching them about the love of God that will guide them the rest of their lives. She enjoys being able to bring the sacraments to others, and to share the teachings of Jesus, and opening others up to how all people still can live into the teachings in the world today. She also loves to collaborate with other priest and share in the ministries together.

“I think female preachers have a lot to



The RT. Reverend Rita Jefferson stands with The Reverend Thomas Nsubuga.

offer to the church at large. We are very capable and bring a new and different perspective to the gospels. I think women can relate to both males and females and have a very pastoral heart. We are geared to take care of people,” Jefferson said.

“On the other side of my life, I have three children who are grown with families of their own. I have two stepchildren and 13 grandchildren and of course, two dogs. I am blessed on both accounts and my life is very full,” explained Jefferson.

Announcements

Amendment Voting Day takes place tomorrow

Early Voting ended Saturday, March 22 for the four Amendments on the Election Ballot scheduled tomorrow, Saturday, March 29. Voters should let their voices be head by voting.

The Four Amendments briefly state: (1) Granting the Louisiana Supreme Court the right to discipline out of state lawyers for unethical legal practices in Louisiana. (Amends Article V, Sections 5 (B), 15 (A) and 16 (A). (2) Revise Article VII of the Constitution of Louisiana several adjustments to lower income tax, increase income deductions for those over 65 and many more. Read carefully. (3) SUPPORT AMENDMENT TO PROVIDE LEGISLATURE AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE WHICH FELONY CRIMES COMMITTED BY PERSON UNDER 17 TRANSFERRED FOR CRIMINAL PROSECUTION S AN ADULT (Amends Article V, Section19). (4) Amendment to provide for use of the earliest date to fill judicial vacancies (Amends Article V, Section 22 (B). For additional information on the Amendment on to <https://powercoalition.org>.

For additional election information, contact the Lincoln Parish Registrar of Voters, located on 100 W. Texas Ave., Ruston, or call (318) 251-5110.

Lincoln Prep to Host Spring Carnival

Lincoln Prep is hosting its Spring into Learning (Carnival) on April 10th from 5 to 7pm at the school. The Carnival will feature Math Games and Adult BINGO and is open to the public.

Grambling NAACP Annual Banquet set for April 5

The Grambling Branch of the

NAACP (6094) will hold its scholarship banquet Saturday, April 5 at 6 p.m. in the Hobby Assembly Center, 100 Stadium Drive Grambling.

The tickets for the banquet are \$40 and a table, seating eight is \$320.

For information, contact Doris Mazet, 318-202-0085.

Annual Denim and Pearls scholarship event set

The Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Epsilon Alpha Zeta Chapter will have its annual Denim and Pearl scholarship event on Saturday, April 12 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Ruston Civic Center.

The tickets for the events are \$40 and a table, seating eight is \$280. Tickets may be purchased from any member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority until April 1.

Individuals to be recognized during the event are Service: Jennie McCarthy, Scholarship: Rosalind Russell, Sisterhood: Nikole Roebuck and Finer Womanhood: Nanthalia McJamerson

‘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.

NAMI Family support group holds meeting

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) will hold a support group meeting Thursday, April 17, at 2 p.m. in the Lincoln Parish Library, George Byrnside 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 May 15 and June 19. The meetings will continue to be held 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 jjones79aka@yahoo.com or call 93180 614-1961 or SJBurch57@gmail.com or call (318) 350-1612. The meetings are free to the public and all are invited to attend.

Exodus Family Farms to hold Third Egg Hunt

Exodus Family Farms will hold its third annual Egg Hunt event Saturday, April 19, from 4 to 7 p.m. The Farm is located at 343 Heard Road Ruston, 71270.

Activities for the event will include free food, an Egg Painting & Dyeing Station, Face Painting Station, Craft / Arts, Relay Races, Photo Booth with the Easter Bunny Petting Zoo & Mini Farm Tour Open Fishing Jumpers, Glow Bubbles, Play Zone and Glow-in-the-Dark Easter Egg Hunt.

“Our objective for this event is to unite families for a memorable Easter experience, highlighting the sense of community that is inherent to this sacred holiday. We would be grateful for any form of support be it monetary contributions, your attendance or volunteer work,” said Deidra D. Scott, farm owner.

For additional information please contact Scott at 318-514-8855.

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.

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 them 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.

Mt. Olive to sponsor Women’s Conference

The Mt. Olive Baptist Church of Grambling will hold its annual Women’s Conference Saturday, April 26, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The church is located at 571 Mt. Olive Road Ruston, 71270. Rev. Donald Young is the pastor. Please RSVP at 318-251-9640, 248-796-1509 or 318-614-4726.

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Local advisor offers policy options for LPRE members

By Joice M. Dunn

Continuing the yearly theme, “Celebrating Lifelong Learning” the Lincoln Parish Retired Educators (LPRE) received updated health care information to guide them in future decision-making. The regular monthly meeting was held at the Council on Aging Senior Center in Ruston Thursday, March 13.

Kaitlyn Mitchell, local advisor for Association Member Benefit Advisors (AMBA), is to review benefit packages for an employee or a member of the Louisiana Retired Teachers Association (LRTA) of which the LPRE is associated with.

Mitchell talked with the group about updated insurance plans to benefit them after retirement. “Many times, before an employee retire, they might choose policies that they’ve forgotten about, my responsibility as AMBA representative, is to review policies (old and new) with them,” she said.

Mitchell explained to the group that there should be a policy already in place if there’s a need for long-term care. Most people assume that Medicaid or Medicare will take care of their extended stay needs,



Dr. Liz White, LPRE president, demonstrates her book as she reads to Paul E. Slaton HeadStart students during “Read Across America Week”


but because most retirees have a pension, savings, house, and cars, they will not unless those things are eliminated.

The Representative said that up to 70% of retirees need some kind of care or attention once they begin to age. Medicaid will pay for a Nursing Home stay for 20 to 30 days if the person is placed in a hospital as a patient.

Mitchell emphasized the Benefit of the Home Care Plus plan is making it possible for the retiree to stay in their own home with skilled assistance. The retiree decides how to spend the Home Care Plus benefits, paid directly to them or a designated medical provider, in addition to any other health care coverage, including Medicare. The benefits vary based on the plan option selected.

There’s no waiting period for the policy to take effect and it can be customized to fit a retiree’s needs.

In other business, Dr. Liz White, LPRE president, extended a word of thanks to those members who participated in the “Read Across America” program at Paul E. Slaton HeadStart School. The week of reading took place March 10 -14. Some members of the organization observed National Retirees Teachers Day, Thursday, March 20 by dining together and sharing teaching stories.




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Community

State Senator Katrina Jackson Shares Insights on Balancing Mental Health in Politics

By Lena Claybon

On Thursday, March 13, NAMI Ruston hosted a mental health workshop titled “Political and Mental Health: Navigating Changes and Finding Balance,” featuring Louisiana State Senator Katrina Jackson. Held on Grambling State University’s campus in Grambling Hall, the event provided attendees with valuable insights into how public service can impact mental health and strategies for maintaining well-being while managing the pressures of political and personal life.

Senator Jackson, who represents Louisiana’s 34th Senate District, has served in public office since 2012. Throughout her career, she has navigated the high demands of political service while maintaining her personal well-being. During her talk, she shared key strategies that have helped her stay balanced amidst the challenges of politics and offered advice to attendees on preserving their own mental health.

Finding Balance in Public Service

Jackson emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong personal foundation, stating that she always returns to her core values: faith, family, and service. She highlighted how political life can be all-consuming, often leading public servants to neglect their own well-being. For her, staying centered involves prioritizing her relationship with God, ensuring she spends quality time with her family, and remaining committed to the people she serves rather than being swayed by political status or power.

“Regardless of whether I’m speaking at the White House, in Washington, or in my district, I have to remember my center,” Jackson said. “When I feel overwhelmed, I always ask myself, ‘Am I keeping my priorities straight?’”

Navigating Political Disagreements with Grace

Senator Jackson underscored the importance of maintaining civility in political debates and discussions. She advised attendees to avoid letting political or ideology conflicts affect their inner peace and personal interactions.

“Politics can pull you in many directions, but for my mental health, I always ask: Can I still sit down and have dinner with this person after a debate?” she noted. “If I leave an argument feeling like I lost a piece of my peace, then I know I need to reassess my approach.”

She recounted an early experience in the Louisiana House of Representatives where she allowed herself to be provoked into an uncharacteristic outburst. That moment taught her a valuable lesson: maintaining composure and staying true to her principles is essential for her well-being and effectiveness as a leader.



Senator Katrina Jackson talks to attendee.



DeAngelo Williams

Managing Emotional Challenges and Setbacks

Politics often involves setbacks, and Jackson spoke candidly about how difficult it can be to fight for policies year after year without seeing immediate results. She acknowledged that these frustrations can take an emotional toll but emphasized the need to persevere.

“When you present a bill that you know will help people, and it gets rejected year after year, it can wear on you emotionally,” she admitted. “But I remind myself to stay focused on my purpose and not let temporary defeats define my work or my well-being.”

Jackson also emphasized the



Keisha Gayten-Powell

need for self-care, urging attendees to take breaks from the constant news cycle and social media, which can amplify stress and anxiety.

Advice for Students and Young Professionals

In response to a question about staying positive amid political and social changes, Jackson encouraged young people to

focus on resilience and historical perspective. She reminded the audience that past generations faced enormous hardships and overcame them, and that today’s challenges should be met with the same determination.

“If our ancestors could build a life with nothing, then we, with all the resources we have today, can certainly rise above our challenges,” she said. “We can’t

let the struggles we face today break our spirit.”

She also stressed the importance of community and faith as sources of strength, urging students to seek support from their families, mentors, and faith communities.

Conclusion

Senator Jackson’s discussion provided a powerful reminder of the importance of mental health in high-stress professions like politics. Her advice on staying grounded, maintaining personal integrity, and managing stress resonated with attendees, leaving them with practical strategies for navigating their own challenges.

As the event concluded, Jackson encouraged everyone to continuously check in with themselves and ensure that their mental and emotional well-being remains a priority.

Following the event, a student, DeAngelo Williams, in attendance said his takeaway from Senator Jackson’s speech was: “To always remain [strong] and go back to your core and know that nobody else is your provider but God. Also, always continue to stay true to what you believe is right and go from there and just know that, even if something doesn’t happen the way that you want it to happen, just know that you came here for a reason and that you still have a purpose.”

Another young lady in attendance, Keisha Gayten-Powell, a graduate of Grambling State University said her key takeaway from the event was: “The overall message was that we, as African Americans, no matter what we face, we always find a way to overcome. So no matter what’s going on or what we’re facing right now, to stay encouraged because, [just like the past] we will overcome. So, it was just encouraging, and uplifting, and [good information] about finding a balance between the political unrest that’s going on versus your mental health. You know, it can make you a little sad. You get mad. You go through a wealth of emotions. But at the end of the day, we have to stay encouraged and uplifted because we will prevail because we are a prevailing people.”

And, lastly, when Dr. Hall was asked what was her motivation to do this mental health event for the students, she responded, “Well, I always had a lot of questions regarding all the changes we’ve been going through with politics, especially how it was affecting the students, like, how it was making them feel. And I said, well, I need to put something together [to help]. And we need to find out from someone who is out there [in the trenches] everyday in the political arena dealing with it firsthand. And that’s what motivated me to put this event on.”



J&J Express

Menu

959 RWE Jones Dr, Grambling
M-Sat 10:30 am - 10:00 pm
Sunday 10:30 am - 9:00pm



Burgers & Sandwiches

All burgers are with mayo, lettuce, pickles, tomatoes, onions

Cheeseburger	Combo	\$8.59	Only \$6.09
Double Cheeseburger	Combo	\$10.79	Only \$7.99
Hamburger	Combo	\$8.39	Only \$5.79
Chicken Sandwich	Combo	\$8.29	Only \$5.99
Chicken Tender Sandwich	Combo	\$8.19	Only \$5.89
Fish Fillet Sandwich	Combo	\$9.19	Only \$7.09

Seafood

Seafood baskets include 2 sides and hush puppies

3 Piece Fish Basket	\$10.59
5 Piece Fish Basket	\$16.09
Shrimp Basket (9 Jumbo Shrimp)	\$11.09
Fish & Shrimp Basket (2 Fish Fillets, 4 Jumbo Shrimp)	\$13.99
Extra Shrimp (6 jumbo shrimp)	\$6.99

J&J FAVS

Loaded Fries
Cheese \$3.99
Chili and cheese \$4.99

Loaded Nachos
Cheese \$3.99
Chili and cheese \$4.99

Corn Dog \$1.79

NEW ITEMS

8-pc tender bites (with your choices of flavor) \$3.09
NEW FLAVOR - Spicy Peach (on any item)

Wings & Tenders

6 Piece Wings
6 traditional bone-in wings with your choice of flavor
Combo \$9.99 Only \$7.29
8 Piece Wings
8 traditional bone-in wings with your two choice of flavor
Combo \$12.09 Only \$8.99
10 Piece Wings
10 traditional bone-in wings with your two choice of flavor.
Combo \$13.79 Only \$10.69
3 Piece Tenders
3 juicy tenders with your choice of flavor.
Combo \$8.74 Only \$6.44
5 Piece Tenders
5 juicy tenders with your two choices of flavor.
Combo \$11.54 Only \$8.44
8 Piece Tenders
8 juicy tenders with your two choices of flavor.
Combo \$14.99 Only \$11.99

Church News

A Black Man’s Opinion of The Plight of Black Women in America

By Rev. Clarence J. Reese, Sr.

Since this month is dedicated to celebrating the Historically Black Women of America, I feel compelled to share my thoughts on an issue that has persisted in this country for decades. It is shameful that we call ourselves the United States of America when we remain so divided as a nation. The recent presidential election served as a glaring reminder of this division. While I don’t consider myself a racist, I also don't consider myself naive. Let the truth be told: we had an opportunity to change the course of history, but because of the melanin in one's skin, we were instead served the same bitter dish that has contributed to America’s weakened position on the world stage.

Meanwhile, one group claimed to have been cheated out of an election. I wonder if they have ever considered how Black people have been cheated out of political, economic, and social opportunities for centuries. Though it may seem at times that we, as a race, are losing the war, we have won some significant battles. Many of these victories are owed to the strength and presence of Black women in America. The past presidential election wasn’t about qualifications, but about fear-mongering and hate. I won’t waste time discussing the qualifications of the other candidate, but I do want to take a moment to celebrate a woman of color who defied the odds: Kamala Harris.

Kamala Harris made history as the first female Vice President of the United States, the highest-ranking female official in U.S. history, and the first Black and Asian American to hold this position. Her rise to power was the result of hard work and determi-



Kamala Harris

nation. She pulled herself up by the bootstraps, made choices that put her in a position to serve as a leader of this nation, and changed the course of history. Before her, we were inspired by the grace and intellect of Michelle Obama, the first Black First Lady of the United States. Her husband, President Barack Obama, once said she was smarter than he was, a sentiment that underscores the truth that behind every successful Black man stands a strong Black woman.

Not only was Michelle Obama the first African American First Lady, but she has also been a continuous source of inspiration through her efforts to promote health and wellness for children across the nation. Her bestselling books, *Becoming* and *The Light We Carry*, encourage women everywhere to dream big and persevere. With-

out strong Black women in the household, church, schools, and the workforce, we would still be decades behind in our achievements as a people.

Let me take a moment to recognize just a few of the many strong Black women who have shaped history in this country:

Oprah Winfrey, who began her career in beauty pageants before transitioning into broadcasting and becoming the first Black female billionaire in the U.S. through her media empire.

Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to Congress in 1968, who later became the first Black candidate for President of the United States in 1972.

Bessie Coleman, who overcame racial barriers to become the first Black woman to earn a pilot's license.

Harriet Tubman, who helped lead enslaved people to freedom

through the Underground Railroad and became the first Black woman to serve in the military.

Ida B. Wells, a journalist and activist who led an anti-lynching campaign and co-founded the NAACP.

Rosa Parks, whose refusal to give up her seat on a bus became a symbol of resistance to racial segregation.

Maya Angelou, an influential writer and activist known for her works that explored the Black experience in America.

Nina Simone, whose powerful voice and music made her an iconic figure in the jazz community and the civil rights movement.

Wangari Maathai, the first Black African woman to receive a Nobel Peace Prize for her environmental and women's rights activism.

Ruby Bridges, who at the age of six became the first African



Shirley Chisolm

American child to integrate an all-white school.

Tarana Burke, who founded the #MeToo movement, empowering survivors of sexual violence.

Ketanji Brown Jackson, the first Black woman appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Mae Jemison, the first Black woman in space.

Simone Biles, a gymnast hailed as the greatest of all time with multiple Olympic and World Championship medals.

Josephine Baker, a performer and resistance fighter who became an advocate for civil rights.

And these are just the well-known figures. Many stronger Black women, whose names we may never hear in print, have contributed immeasurably to this nation's progress—whether in homes, churches, schools, politics, or the workforce. While we may not call them by name, we recognize them as the pillars of our communities: grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters, and yes, sometimes even through derogatory titles. Yet, despite the adversity they faced, these women have been the foundation of America’s growth, and they are the reason this country is more than just a nation of shame.

Reverend Reese maybe contacted by calling (318) 255-0525.

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
Gumspring, 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

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

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.*

Health & Wellness

Charming's Corner

Crystal Healing: God's Natural Gift for Our Well-Being

By Charming Davis

In a world where stress, illness, and emotional struggles are all too common, many people are searching for natural ways to restore their health and inner peace. One of the most powerful yet often overlooked healing tools is crystals—beautiful, natural formations created by God Himself for our well-being. At Naturally Charming Universe Holistic Wellness Center, we help people discover the benefits of crystal healing, a simple yet profound way to balance the mind, body, and spirit.



Charming Davis

What is Crystal Healing?

Crystal healing is based on the understanding that everything in the universe carries a specific energy frequency, including our bodies and emotions. When

we are stressed, sick, or emotionally unbalanced, our natural energy flow becomes blocked or disrupted. Crystals, formed deep within the Earth by God's divine creation, hold pure, stable vibrations that can help us realign, heal, and restore harmony.

Each crystal has unique properties designed to support different areas of life:

- **Amethyst** – Known as the "Stone of Peace," it promotes relaxation, clarity, and spiritual awareness.
- **Rose Quartz** – The "Stone of

Love," which helps heal emotional wounds and strengthens relationships.

- **Citrine** – A powerful crystal for abundance, confidence, and joy.
- **Black Tourmaline** – A strong protector against negative energy and stress.
- **Clear Quartz** – The "Master Healer," which amplifies positive energy and enhances overall well-being.

By simply wearing, carrying, or placing these crystals in your environment, you can experience their natural healing energy.

God Gave Us Everything We Need to Heal

Many people are unaware that God placed everything we need on this Earth to heal—including plants, water, the sun, and crystals. These stones are not just beautiful; they are part of God's divine creation, designed to help us restore balance, strengthen faith, and live in alignment with His plan.

Throughout history, crystals have been used for healing, protection, and spiritual connection. Even in the Bible, stones like onyx, jasper, sapphire, and emerald are mentioned as part of God's sacred design (Exodus 28:17-20, Revelation 21:19-20). Their energy has been recognized for centuries, and today, we continue to use them as natural tools for physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

The Benefits of Crystal Healing

Crystal healing is a gentle yet effective way to improve your overall health. Some of the many benefits include:

- Stress and Anxiety Relief—Holding or meditating with calming crystals can bring deep relaxation.
- **Pain and Tension Release** – Certain stones help reduce physical discomfort and promote healing.
- **Emotional Balance** – Crystals help clear negative emotions, promoting love, joy, and peace.
- **Spiritual Growth** – Many people feel more connected to **God's** presence when using crystals in prayer or meditation.
- **Increased Energy** and Focus – Wearing or carrying crystals can help boost motivation and mental clarity.

How Easy Is It to Experience Crystal Healing?

At Naturally Charming Universe Holistic Wellness Center, we offer a wide selection of high-quality, God-given crystals that you can use for healing, meditation, or everyday energy balance. You don't need any special knowledge—just an open heart and a desire to experience **the** natural gifts God has provided.

Visit us at:

- 311 Main Street, Grambling, LA
Business hours:
• Tuesday – Friday: 8:30 AM – 1:30 PM
• Saturday: 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM

- Closed Sunday & Monday
Sessions and consultations can be booked in-store or online at www.naturallycharminguniverse.com.

Exclusive Discounts & Weekly Giveaway!

We want to make it easy for you to experience the power of crystal healing. That's why we offer multiple discounts throughout the week on crystals, jewelry, and healing sessions.

Plus, when you purchase any item in-store, you'll automatically be entered into a weekly giveaway for a FREE one-hour healing session of your choice! Whether you're new to crystal healing or already love working with crystals, this is a great way to experience their benefits firsthand.

Start Your Healing Journey with God's Natural Gifts

Crystals are more than just beautiful stones—they are part of God's divine creation, placed on this Earth to help us heal, grow, and live in balance. Whether you're seeking relief from stress, emotional healing, or a deeper connection to God, these natural tools can support and uplift you on your journey.

Visit Naturally Charming Universe Holistic Wellness Center today and let us help you discover the healing power of God's natural gifts.

For more information or to book a session, visit www.naturallycharminguniverse.com or stop by our location. We look forward to sharing this beautiful healing experience with you!

Celebrating Women's History Month: Taking care of Women's Mental Health

By Jeannetta Stephens-Jones

March is the month in which we celebrate and honor contributions made by women. Women's History Month is an opportunity to highlight the achievements of women in various fields. Although this is a notable event, it is also very imperative for women to take stock of themselves and take care of their mental health. Women are often busy taking care of everything and everyone else and fail to take the time to invest in their well-being. Along with celebrating achievements, women are also encouraged to make their physical and mental health a priority and understand that to care for loved ones; they must take care of themselves. Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It is more than the absence of a mental illness—it's essential to your overall health and quality of life.

According to (Dr. Himabindu Sreenivasulu) Mental health is very crucial and it affects the way we think and feel and even could affect how we handle stress. Good mental health supports productive daily life, fulfilling relationships, and effectively coping with



J. Jones

challenges. Mental health is integral to enjoying life and contributes greatly to physical health.

What affects women's mental health?

All people experience mental and emotional pain. However, one in five women has a common mental health problem. There are a variety of factors that put women at risk, such as depression and anxiety. These factors are more likely to affect women more than men:

To be caregivers, which can lead to stress, anxiety and isolation.

Living in poverty leads to concerns regarding personal safety and working mainly in the home leads to social isolation.

Some women experience not only physical abuse but sexual abuse as well. These abuses can have a long-term impact on their mental health.

When women are unable to express what they are feeling and how they are feeling, then they internalize which leads to depression, eating disorders and self-harm.

Tips on prioritizing health and wellness may include the following:

- Put the focus on you, for a change. Do something for yourself
- Engage in meditations/affirmations
- Exercise, go for a walk or run
- Do not ignore your boundaries for the benefit of others. This could leave you feeling unhappy and drained
- Listen to music/dance
- Drink plenty of water
- Do not hesitate to say no

How can women protect their mental health?

There are steps that can be taken to help protect mental health. Dr. Kristen Lee offers this advice to shield and sustain:

- Recognize that you are not a robot. Women are humans and are not designed to be on 24-7.
- Avoid self-medication. Find some other ways other than alcohol, drugs, or sweets to raise your dopamine and endorphins.
- Practice mindfulness. Be present in each moment and avoid rash judgment of emotions.
- Get plenty of sleep. Getting enough hours of sleep fosters concentration. Research suggests that sleepiness

can damage work performance and mood.

- Eat Clean. Avoid processed food. Foods that have been changed from its natural state are considered processed and can disrupt our brains and bodies.
- Laugh and play. Humor is a protective factor for mental health.
- Unleash your creativity. Novelty and variety are beneficial for the brain.
- Count your blessings.

The month of March is Women's History Month. A month that is dedicated to reflecting on and honoring the often-overlooked contributions made by women. Women are encouraged to enjoy the celebrations be mindful and take care of their mental health.

Resources

- www.webmd.org
www.nami.org
www.nimh.gov
mentalhealth.org
www.mayoclinic.org
www.helpguide.org

This article was written by Jeannetta Stephens-Jones, Ed.D., retired educational diagnostician/ speech pathologist and president of NAMI Ruston. Contact her jjones79_aka@yahoo.com.

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22' Jeep Grand Cherokee CERTIFIED Stock P3975 \$24,599

22' Acura ILX Stock P3915 \$24,988

22' Dodge Charger SXT LOADED Stock 3942 \$24,499

22' Chevy Malibu 67k stock #P3971 \$18,999

23' Nissan Altima S 42k stock #P3970 \$20,599

24' Nissan Altima SV #P3956 \$23,745



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Arts & Culture

Broadway Director Zhailon Livingston Inspires Local Creatives in Campus Workshop

By Lena Claybon

A wave of creative energy swept through the Floyd L. Sandle Theatre on GSU’s campus, on March 17 & 18, as Broadway director Zhailon Livingston led an inspiring workshop entitled, "Redefining Success: Overcome the Fear of Failure and Take the Next Steps", sharing his journey, insights, and passion for storytelling with students. The intimate event provided attendees with an exclusive look into the creative process behind Broadway productions and the transformative power of theater.



Zhailon Livingston on Broadway and beyond.

He has not only broken barriers, but continues to open doors for the next generation of storytellers. He is a Shreveport-raised storyteller, Obie Award-winning director, and activist, and he holds the distinction of being the youngest Black director on Broadway. He is a board member of the Broadway Advocacy Coalition, which he co-created, and teaches the Theater of Change course at Columbia University.

Livingston, known for his work on major productions such as *Chicken & Biscuits*, which premiered on Broadway in 2021, and *TINA: The Tina Turner Musical*, engaged the audience with his vibrant storytelling and deep commitment to inclusivity in the arts. He emphasized the importance of authenticity, urging participants to embrace their unique voices.

"Theater is about truth," Livingston said. "Every artist has a story to tell, and the magic happens when you lean into your



Zhailon Livingston speaks to workshop attendees. Photo by Rodrecas Davis

own experiences."

Livingston shared behind-the-scenes anecdotes, offering a rare glimpse into the challenges and triumphs of bringing a Broadway production to life. He also highlighted the significance of community in the arts, encouraging local creatives to support each other and build a network that fosters growth.

One of the most memorable moments of the session came when he talked about going from what should have been the highest point in his career at that time -- getting to direct his first Broadway play -- to the lowest point and how it, ultimately, helped him redefine success.

"When I was first offered the job directing *Chicken & Biscuits* on Broadway, I met with the Producer of the play, at a coffee shop in NY, feeling like, 'Wow, little Zhailon, who played Aladdin in his fifth grade play, is sitting next to a big Broadway producer. Wow, this is going to be amazing!'

We sipped coffee, and he said, 'Look, we aren't going to make any money on this show. It's a really scary time for the industry. [We're in the middle of COVID] and people are still scared to come out. We are taking a big gamble with tight timelines, and very little time, but if we can just stay open through our scheduled dates, then that would mean it was successful.'

He also said, 'We don't have to go to Broadway, but if we don't do that now, we may not get another opportunity to move the show. So, you think you can do this?'

Of course, the answer was, 'YES'. But, unfortunately, due to a number of cast members contracting COVID-19, we had to close *Chicken & Biscuits* a few weeks early because it would have cost the production too much money to wait for those cast members to get back.

I flashed back to that coffee I had with the producer and remembered him saying, if we can

just stay open for the entirety of the run, we would be successful. So, by one person's account of success, one person's metric that was handed down to me and my team, I told myself, we were not successful.

We also got mixed reviews from the New York Times, my industry's standard of artistic success. I never held it to the highest esteem, but I'd be lying to say it didn't matter.

I had seen young, white, male creatives get their big break on Broadway and then every other door seemingly opened up for them. After my show closed, I learned that people like me who didn't come from money, didn't get the graduate degree from the favorite school and whose color and age still was unusual in the spaces I was occupying, the powers that be saw me as someone who got to direct on Broadway, not someone who was always supposed to be there. That realization was a low moment.

I had given all the power to the producer of the show to define what success should be for me. I judged myself by his definition of success as a name next to a budget line. I thought when you make history you get a letter in the mail or something. If I hadn't done the research myself, I wouldn't even have known I made history at all."

Livingston then went on to say, "It wasn't until I directed a production of *The Wiz* outside of New York that I started to fully understand the impact my achievements had made. The cast and community hosted a welcome dinner for me. An older black man stood up. He was an artistic pillar of the community.

He got in front of the room and he said, 'We want to thank Broadway's youngest black director for coming here and bringing his talents and vision to our city. Today we see you and we wanted to throw this dinner to motivate you to keep going. You have inspired us all with your achievements and we will be watching what you do.'

Livingston said that showed him the importance of community. "They don't just validate your accomplishments, but they commit to bearing witness to wherever your next [achievement] takes you. So, I decided then and there that I would define MY idea of success for me. It helped me to begin to process my feelings about what happened on Broadway. I had this revelation that the choices I made in my career and the story I told myself about those choices were not aligned. I had made real impact but was walking around like a failure. I had to tell myself a different story."

As the workshop concluded, he left the audience with a powerful message: "Art has the power to heal, to challenge, and to connect us all. Keep creating. Keep telling your stories. The world needs them."



Dawn Robinson

Former En Vogue Singer Dawn Robinson Reveals She’s Lived in Her Car for Three Years

Nationwide — Dawn Robinson, former En Vogue member, revealed in a YouTube video that she has been living in her car for the past three years. She shared her struggles before deciding to embrace the 'car life' lifestyle.

Robinson, 58, was living with her parents in Las Vegas in 2020 but later moved to Los Angeles on her former manager's advice. She initially stayed in a hotel for eight months, but finding stable housing became difficult. Robinson claimed her manager discouraged her from securing an apartment, making her reliant on him.

Frustrated with her situation, she started researching 'car life' and decided to give it a try. She moved to Malibu and said it just felt like it was the right thing to do.

"I felt free. I felt like I was on a camping trip," she said, according to People.

Throughout the video, Robinson made it clear she wasn't looking for sympathy. "It's not 'woe is me.' I'm learning about who I am, I'm learning myself as a person, as a woman."

Despite the challenges, she expressed pride in her journey. "I'm proud of what I've accomplished out here," she said, adding that she would have an apartment if she could but is glad she made the decision to live independently. She ended her video by encouraging others to take risks and face fears.

Robinson was a founding member of En Vogue, which was formed in 1989. She remained with the group until 1997, during which they earned six Grammy nominations. She later signed with Dr. Dre's Aftermath label and rejoined En Vogue briefly in 2005 and 2009. She also pursued acting and appeared in the first season of *R&B Divas*: Los Angeles.

Michelle Obama and her brother Craig Robinson launch new podcast

Nationwide — Former First Lady Michelle Obama has launched a new podcast with her brother, Craig Robinson, to discuss life's challenges and relationships. Produced by the Obamas' media company, Higher Ground, the podcast aims to foster open and honest conversations.

"With everything going on in the world, we're all looking for answers and people to turn to," she told The Hill. "My brother Craig and I launched the IMO podcast to create a space for people to come as



Michelle Obama and brother Craig Robinson

they are, ask honest questions, give their opinions, and have thoughtful conversations about life."

The podcast features discussions on family, faith, and personal growth, offering the siblings' candid perspectives on everyday topics.

Robinson, who is the Executive Director of the National Association of Basketball Coaches, shared that the podcast will reflect the conversations they had growing up and provide fresh insights.

"And now, we're inviting listeners into that conversation, with the hope that it sparks new ideas, new perspectives, and creates the connection we could all use right now."

The Department of Visual and Performing Arts Present

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Floyd L. Sandle Theatre
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GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY®

Sports

Boxing Legend and Entrepreneur George Foreman Passes Away at 76

Staff Report

George Edward Foreman Sr., the two-time heavyweight boxing champion and Olympic gold medalist who became a household name with his bestselling George Foreman Grill, has passed away at the age of 76. His family announced his passing on March 21, 2025, via his official Instagram page, stating that he died peacefully, surrounded by loved ones. Foreman is remembered not only



George Foreman

as a boxing icon but also as a preacher, devoted husband, father, and grandfather—leaving behind a legacy of faith, perseverance, and reinvention.

Born in 1949 in Houston, Texas, Foreman grew up in poverty in the city's Fifth Ward. He left school at 15 and became involved in crime before joining the Job Corps at 16, where he earned his GED and learned carpentry and bricklaying. It was during this time that he discovered boxing, initially to lose weight, but soon realized his natural talent for the sport. At just 19 years old, he won a gold medal at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, famously waving a small American flag in the ring to showcase his pride.

Foreman turned professional in 1969 and quickly rose through the ranks, remaining undefeated until he faced Joe



Foreman and Lyndon Johnson - 1968

Frazier in 1973. His victory over Frazier earned him the heavyweight championship title. However, one of his most famous fights came in 1974, when he faced Muhammad Ali in the legendary "Rumble in the Jungle" in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Ali's victory over Foreman remains one of boxing's most historic moments.

Though Foreman never got a rematch, the two later became close friends. He retired in 1977 after a profound spiritual awakening and became a born-again Christian.

In 1987, facing financial difficulties, Foreman staged a remarkable comeback at the age of 38. He ultimately reclaimed the heavyweight title in 1994, defeating

Michael Moorer and becoming the oldest heavyweight champion in history. His second career in boxing not only brought him renewed success but also expanded his public persona, leading to numerous media appearances and endorsements. He retired for good in 1999 with an impressive record of 76 wins and only five losses.

Beyond boxing, Foreman built a successful business empire. He became the face of the George Foreman Grill in 1994, which went on to sell over 100 million units worldwide. His charisma made him a popular television personality, and in 2022, he even competed on *The Masked Singer*. He also served as an executive producer for the 2023 biopic *Big George Foreman*. Through public speaking and his personal website, GeorgeForeman.com, he continued to share his wisdom and life experiences with fans.

Foreman was a dedicated family man, fathering 12 children—including five sons, all named George Edward Foreman, a decision he said symbolized unity among them. He was married four times, most recently to Mary Joan Martelly, whom he wed in 1985. In later years, he faced allegations of past abuse, which he denied. He is survived by his wife, 11 of his children, and numerous grandchildren.

George Foreman's legacy extends far beyond the boxing ring. His story of resilience, faith, and reinvention will continue to inspire generations to come.

GSU Hits Six Homers over Texas Southern to 15-5 Win but Falls in Series Finale

By GSU ATHLETICS

GRAMBLING, La. | The Grambling State University baseball team put on an offensive show on Saturday afternoon, hitting six home runs in a 15-5 drubbing of Texas Southern in seven innings at Wilbert Ellis Field at R.W.E. Jones Park.

Five G-Men accounted for the six homers with Cameron Hill homering twice. Hill went 3-for-4 with four RBI.

Nyan Hayes, Chris Marcellus, Keanu-Jacobs-Guishard and Shannon Martin were the other G-Men to hit homers.

But unfortunately on Sunday, although the GSU baseball team racked up 15 hits and hit three home runs, it wasn't enough as GSU fell 19-10 to Texas Southern in the series finale.

Jaylyn Bennett, Chenar Brown and Keanu Jacobs-Guishard accounted for all three of Grambling State's home runs. Bennett went 2-for-5 with three RBI and a double, while Jacobs-Guishard put together a three-hit day going 3-for-5 with two RBI.

GSU fell to 9-13 overall and 5-1 in the SWAC, while TSU improved to 9-16 and 4-2 in conference play.

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G-Men Baseball team Congratulating each other on win on Sat.



GSU Ladies Softball Team Win over Alcorn

GSU Ladies' Softball Team Sweeps Alcorn in Commanding Doubleheader

By GSU Athletics

GRAMBLING, La. | Grambling State completed a dominant performance on Saturday, sweeping Alcorn State University in a doubleheader at the GSU Softball Complex.

The Tigers took game one 7-3 before erupting for a 13-5 run-rule victory in game two.

In the first game, Grambling State (11-16, 4-4 SWAC) rallied from an early deficit, using a five-run fifth inning to take control.

Kaytlyn Moore led the way, going 3-for-3 with two RBIs, while Ahsunte' Specks and Christalyn Higgins each drove in a run.

Audrey Richardson (4-2) earned the win, allowing three runs (two earned)

on seven hits in 6.1 innings, while Erin Gibbs recorded the final two outs to secure the victory.

Game two saw Grambling State's offense explode for 13 runs on just four hits, capitalizing on 14 walks and several defensive miscues by Alcorn State (6-17, 2-9).

Cadashia Collins drove in two runs, while Ahsunte' Specks, Deija Russell, and Brooklynn Poullard each added an RBI.

Erin Gibbs (4-5) picked up the win, tossing 4.1 innings, while Chloe Wilson earned the save.

The Tigers jumped out to a 4-1 lead in the first inning and never trailed, using a six-run fifth to put the game out of reach.

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