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# THE GRAMBLING★CONNECTION

Volume 1, No. 21 Friday, August 1, 2025 • “Keeping Our Citizens Informed on the Issues That Matter” • Grambling, LA [www.GramblingConnection.com](http://www.GramblingConnection.com)

## Grambling’s City Council Urges Sign Ups for CivicReady

By Lena W. Claybon

During the most recent City Council meeting held on July 18, City Councilman John Brown gave an impassioned plea urging citizens to sign up for the city’s emergency notification system, CivicReady. It is a free service provided by the city that the Councilman stressed could potentially save lives. He touted the recent flood that happened in Texas as an example. “By now, everyone is aware that on July 4, residents in central Texas experienced a catastrophic flood event. (The most recent death toll is 135 with 3 still missing).

“We the governing body of the city of Grambling have an emergency communication system to warn residents of emergency situations such as tornadoes, hurricanes, catastrophic flooding, interruption of public services, road closures, etc. We put this in place because we care about you, your family, your friends, and your neighbors.”

Which is why he and the City Council have set up four Civic Ready sign-up days to be held Aug. 5-6 and Aug. 11-Aug. 12 from noon – 1 p.m. and 5-6 p.m. to try to bolster the number of city residents able to receive the emergency notifications.

“It only takes three to five minutes to sign up. All you need is your cell phone.” He said.

The councilman went on



STAY INFORMED. STAY SAFE.

CivicReady

Sign up Event

There will be a sign up event at Grambling City Hall August 5th & 6th & August 11th & 12th. There will be two sign up sessions on both days from 12 pm -1 pm & 5 pm - 6 pm. Please join us and sign up

Your cell phone is all you will need in order to sign up! so you never miss an important message about your community.



to say that only around 4% of city residents are enrolled in the program presently which troubles him.

“We only have around 240 people signed up right now, out of roughly 5,000,” Brown said. “I, along with our mayor and City Council, are saddened by the low participation number involved with this free service. We need more to be signed up for the good of everyone. Please get the word out about these sign up days and let’s work together to try and keep everyone as safe as

we can.”

Also, during the meeting, Mayor Alvin Bradley announced that they have chosen Hunt, Guillot & Associates (HGA) of Ruston as the firm who will develop the comprehensive 10-year Master Plan the City held bids for a few months ago.

The plan as reported here a few months ago, will address various aspects of the city’s future, including economic development, housing growth, transportation, and university partnerships.

See *Grambling’s* Page 2

## A Community Fed Up Speaks Out at Ruston Police Meeting

By Lena W. Claybon

It was supposed to be a “meet and greet”, but what unfolded last Tuesday night at Mays Chapel CME Church in Ruston was much more—a wake-up call, a release valve, a cry for change.

Chief Eric Watson, new to the job but not to law enforcement, walked into a room full of people carrying years—maybe decades—of hurt, deep-seated frustration, and fear. with urgent questions about policing practices in Ruston. And to his credit, he didn’t walk out. He listened. He answered. He tried to address their concerns.

But make no mistake: this wasn’t a handshake and smile kind of meeting. Residents didn’t hold back. Story after story poured out—accounts of being mistreated by Ruston police officers, pulled over without cause, yelled at, threatened, charged with “resisting” when all they wanted was clarity.

You could feel the weight in the room—some were angry, some were tired, some just wanted to feel safe. One woman said if an officer tried to pull her over, she wouldn’t stop out of fear. That says something.

Chief Watson spoke honestly. He said things are broken and that change won’t come overnight. He said he’s working on hiring more officers, officers that will do a better job at interacting with the community. He also said he’s bound by civil service rules when it comes to disciplining officers. “Sometimes my hands are tied,” he admitted.

That wasn’t easy for some to hear. They want justice, now. They want change, now.

As Watson, a 25-year law enforcement veteran with experience in both the Ruston Police Department and the DEA, laid out his goals for the department, including hiring more officers, increasing community engagement, and rebuilding trust, his message was frequently interrupt-



Eric Watson, Police Chief

ed by citizens who raised serious concerns about past and present experiences with the police force.

Watson acknowledged those concerns but also defended his officers’ need to act quickly and cautiously—especially in a city that sees frequent vehicle burglaries.

“That’s called aggressive traffic enforcement, and I’m not going to apologize for it,” he said.

Pastor Terence Flucas, who’s church hosted the event, stepped in multiple times to calm tensions.

“Of course we’re pissed off. Of course we’re tired,” he said. “But the chief is here. He showed up. Let’s give him some time.”

### Staffing and Systemic Challenges

Watson emphasized the department’s understaffing. “On a busy Friday or Saturday night, we may only have five officers on duty,” he said.

“That’s not nearly enough to cover the whole city.” His goal is to bring staffing levels up to 27 or 28 officers—the average for a city Ruston’s size.

But hiring has proven difficult. Watson shared that of 17 applicants interviewed recently, only two met the department’s standards. Some applicants, he noted, were unable to even complete a paragraph during the application process.

Watson also pointed to the limitations of civil service procedures, which restrict how and when disciplinary action can be taken against officers.

See *A Community* Page 2

## North Louisiana to receive additional area code

Staff Report

Coming soon to north Louisiana, residents will soon dial a new prefix to reach friends and family as a new area code is introduced.

The existing 318 regions, which include Ruston, Monroe, Bossier City, Shreveport, Alexandria, and the surrounding areas will now bring in a 457 additional area code, not a replacement.

The Louisiana Public

Service Commission said the “overlay” of an additional area code will not change any existing 318 phone numbers. Beginning Thursday, Sept. 25, newly assigned phone numbers in the region may begin with the 457-area code.

For now, the commission said phone calls can be made as usual by dialing either seven or 10 digits to complete local calls. On Monday, Aug. 25, all local calls must be dialed using the area code plus the seven-digit

number. Calls made with just seven digits will not go through.

For example, to check the time and temperature after August 25, you will have to dial 318-255-7722. Dialing 255-7722 will no longer work. The 10-digit number is necessary to distinguish between the two area codes—318 and 457—in use in the region.

The Public Service Commission reported the change is necessary to ensure a continuing supply of phone numbers in the growing 318 region.



## Grambling Lab – Lincoln Prep All-Class Reunion Announcement!

Grambling Laboratory Schools and Lincoln Preparatory School announces its first official All-Class Reunion to be held June 18 – June 21, 2026. Calling all Alumni from all graduating classes from each school to participate! Please join

us in reconnecting, reminiscing, and celebrating our high school legacies!

It will be a four-day weekend filled with fun, memories, music, and laughter as we honor the past and the present. Let’s come together to celebrate the schools that shaped us and the classmates who shared the journey.

Pay for one, two, three or all four events for \$100! T-Shirts for Reunion can also be purchased. Deadline for Event & T-Shirt payments is April 15, 2026. For more information, contact us at [weareonegrambling@gmail.com](mailto:weareonegrambling@gmail.com) to reserve your SPOT!!! Can’t wait to see you in 2026!





OPINION

Louisiana Is Not a State Where Women’s Rights Are Prioritized

By Prentiss Smith

I love Louisiana, and I have always been proud to say that I am a proud Louisianan. I have lived in several other states, and they were nice places, but Louisiana is home, and home is where the heart is. Those of us who are native to this state cherish the unique culture, rich history, and vibrant communities that define our state.

Our festivals, with music, good food, and natural beauty make Louisiana a place like no other, but my love for Louisiana is also tinged with a deep concern and frustration over the direction our state is heading, particularly regarding the rights and autonomy of women. Sadly, women’s rights are not prioritized.

And no, I am not advocating for abortion or anything like that, but I am saying that my beloved state is becoming a battleground where women’s rights are being relentlessly attacked. Louisiana politicians are actively im-

posing their religious and ideological beliefs on the citizenry, and many Louisianans are not feeling it. I know I am not.

Recent legislative actions have made it painfully clear that the state government is intent on stripping away the rights of women, relegating them to second-class citizens who are denied control over their own bodies.

The passing of restrictive abortion laws and the criminalization of mifepristone—the morning-after pill—are alarming developments that signal a dangerous trend. These laws are not just abstract policies; they have real, devastating impacts on the lives of women across Louisiana. Women are being denied basic reproductive healthcare.

Some of these politicians are even talking about outlawing birth control and banning in-vitro fertilizations. They infringe upon a woman’s fundamental right to privacy and her ability to make deeply personal decisions about her reproductive health.



Prentiss Smith

These choices should be hers and hers alone, free from governmental intrusion or the moralizing judgments of others, especially those of predominantly male legislators and judges.

The governor, who often espouses his Christian beliefs all the time, came into office pushing the most restrictive reproductive laws in the country. You can’t make it make sense.

Louisiana lawmakers and judges are imposing their views and values on women, disregarding their autonomy and dignity. This situation is exacerbated by the broader political and judicial climate. The composition of the courts, filled with appointees who hold conserva-

tive, often regressive views on women’s rights, has only made matters worse.

These men in black robes are not merely interpreting the law—they are shaping it to fit their personal ideologies, often at the expense of women’s freedoms and rights. It is essential to recognize that women’s rights are human rights. The ability to make decisions about one’s own body is a fundamental aspect of individual freedom.

Citizens must hold elected and non-elected officials accountable and demand that they respect and protect the rights of all citizens, not just those who conform to their narrow views. Louisiana can be better. We can be a state that upholds the values of equality, respect, and justice.

To achieve this, we need to resist the forces that seek to diminish the rights of women. We must work towards a future where every Louisianan, regardless of gender, has the freedom to make their own choices and live with dignity.

Let us draw on the strength and spirit that makes Louisiana special, and channel it into a movement for change. My love for this state compels me to fight for Louisiana where everyone’s rights are honored and protected.

At its core, the issue of women’s rights transcends mere political ideology. It intersects with public health, individual autonomy, and gender equality. Every person, regardless of gender, should have the right to make decisions about their own body, especially when it comes to matters as personal and intimate as reproductive health.

The notion that men should have any say determining women’s reproductive rights is not only absurd but also deeply problematic. Men do not experience pregnancy, childbirth, or the myriad of physical, emotional, and socioeconomic factors that influence reproductive decisions. Therefore, they cannot fully comprehend the complexities involved in such

choices.

Women’s reproductive rights are fundamentally about health, autonomy, and gender equality. Men must acknowledge their privilege and recognize that they have no inherent right to dictate what women can or cannot do with their bodies.

Since the Dobbs decision and the overturning of Roe vs Wade by the Supreme Court, some states have put the question of women’s productive rights on the ballot, and every initiative has passed with big majorities, even in ruby red Kansas, Kentucky, and Ohio.

American citizens are saying resoundingly that women’s bodies should be off limits to the notions of ideologues who seek to micromanage their reproductive healthcare. Ballot initiatives are on the ballot in several states this November, and there is a likelihood that all of them will pass. Louisiana is not a state where women’s rights are prioritized. That is a problem. And that’s my take. smithpren@aol.com

POTTER MOTIVATION

A Thirst for Knowledge: Starting the School Year with Purpose

By Rusty Potter

As the summer winds down and the school bells prepare to ring once again, students of all ages will soon return to classrooms, halls, and campuses filled with new opportunities. Back-to-school time is more than just shopping for supplies - it’s the opening of a new chapter. And what better way to begin than with a mindset rooted in the words of a great educator and leader, Mary McLeod Bethune?

In a letter she once wrote, Bethune expressed the powerful idea of having “a thirst for knowledge.” That phrase leaps off the page with urgency, power, and hope. A thirst for knowledge is more than just wanting to get good grades - it’s about being hungry to

learn, to grow, and to rise above circumstances. It’s about you showing up for your future.

Mary Bethune was born to parents who had been enslaved, yet she went on to become one of the greatest educational leaders in American history. She founded a school, advised presidents, and empowered generations to believe that knowledge was a tool for success. Her journey was not easy, but her thirst for knowledge lit a fire that no obstacle could extinguish.

Today, as students prepare for a new school year, we must recapture that same spirit. School is not just a place to go - it’s a place to grow.



Rusty Potter

And the more we treat it as a stepping stone toward our dreams, the more we position ourselves for success.

Parents, remind your children that education is not a punishment - it’s a privilege. Some children across the world don’t have access to classrooms, books, or even pencils. What many take for granted here is a dream far out of reach for others. Let us be grateful, but more importantly, let us be motivated to do our best.

To students, especially those who may not feel excited about going back: you don’t have to know everything on day one. You just need the desire to grow. You may not like every

subject, and that’s okay - but don’t let boredom or fear steal your opportunity to grow. Be curious. Ask questions. Be bold enough to care about your future.

And to our teachers, thank you. You are the modern-day torchbearers of Bethune’s legacy. Your impact is not just in the lessons you teach, but in the love, consistency, and encouragement you offer daily.

This school year, let’s all begin with a thirst - not just for grades or tests - but a thirst for truth, for understanding, for growth.

Mary McLeod Bethune said, “The whole world opened to me when I learned to read.” May our schools be places where the world continues to open for every child. Here’s to a safe school year filled with purpose and a thirst for knowledge.

Grambling’s From Page 1

The plan will also focus on revitalizing Main Street and improving accessibility throughout the city.

Other business the City Council addressed in the meeting was to approve a resolution to keep property tax millage rates the same for 2025.

“We’re not going up on any millages at this time,

so basically, our taxes will remain the same as we move forward,” said Mayor Alvin Bradley.

Also, Councilman Jerry Lewis proposed adding a second garbage truck for the city. “With only one truck, when that truck breaks, we have to either bring someone else in to run our garbage pickup routes, or we have to rent the equipment.” He also said that he and Pub-

lic Works Director, Eric Caldwell have located a truck that could work and with that truck, they have also offered a payment plan.

He said he hopes to get it all done and bring it back to the Mayor and Council so that it can be voted on. Last but not least, the City Council approved the hiring of Ronnie Skinner for the Grambling Fire Department.

A Community From Page 1

“I have to hand them a note and then I can’t say anything else until Civil Service responds,” he explained, noting that investigations can take months.

**Commitment to Change**

Despite the challenges, Watson says he is committed to changing the culture of policing in Ruston. He is developing a Citizen’s Academy to give residents an inside look at law enforcement operations and to promote better understanding between officers and the public.

“This job is about

building relationships,” Watson said. “I want to change the experience people have with law enforcement. I want us to have as many positive interactions as we can.”

The next community meeting with Chief Watson is scheduled for 7 p.m. on August 4 at Zion Traveler Baptist Church.

**THE GRAMBLING CONNECTION**

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**THE GRAMBLING CONNECTION**

**Subscription Information:**  
Print Subscription - 11.99/mo.  
Online Subscription - 6.99/mo.

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To contact us by phone: Call 318-224-2676  
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Published bi-weekly on Fridays except on Holidays by The Grambling Connection Media Group, LLC, Grambling, LA

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# COMMUNITY

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Grambling State to hold school opening activities

The Grambling Favrot Student Union Board will present “Welcome Week 2025” Monday, Aug. 4 until Saturday, August 10. The residence halls will open on Friday, Aug. 1 and residence halls will open for upperclassmen on Tuesday and Wednesday, Aug. 5, 6 with classes starting Thursday, Aug. 7. For more information, please call the registrar’s office at (318) 274-2385 or campus operator at (318) 274-3811.

### Parish Health Hub/HELP Agency to hold ribbon cutting

The Lincoln Parish Health Hub/HELP Agency will celebrate its new home with a Ribbon cutting and open house Friday, August 1 at 10 a.m. The facility will now open its doors at 316 Mills Ave., Ruston. For more information please call (318) 251-5136.

### Line Dance class available for the Grambling area

A Line Dance Class with Yatta at Board & Bottle is now available for the Grambling area each Monday at 130 W. Park Ave. in Ruston and doors open at 5:30 p.m. The free class is being instructed by Kenyatta Collins.

The next session is set for Monday, August 4. For additional information please contact Collins at 832- 891-7488 or WWW.REALLYGREATSITE.COM.

### Annual Back to School Giveaway set

Entertainment ETC and The City of Grambling will present the 16th annual School Supply Giveaway Saturday, Aug. 9 at 1 p.m., Grambling Fire Station on 562 Stadium Dr.

The event is sponsored by the Grambling Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi. To make a donation or more information, call 318-791-7969.

### NAACP will hold monthly meetings on third Thursday

The Grambling Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) #6094B will host its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, August 21, at 6 p.m. Via teleconference. For additional information, please call or text 318-680-7679, Grace Tatem.

### NAMI Family support group holds meeting

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) will hold a support group meeting Thursday, Aug. 21, at 2 p.m. in the Lincoln Parish Library, George Byrns Conference Room, 910 North Trenton St., Ruston. The meetings will continue each third Thursday of each month until December.

Anyone at least 18 years old may RSVP to jjones79aka@yahoo.com or call 93180 (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.

### GSU Football Nutritional Program seeks help

Looking for donations from committed and supportive friends of the Grambling State University (GSU) Football Coach Mickey Joseph and the GSU Football Nutritional Program. At This Time, All Donations are being made to: HBCU Boosters, Earmarked for the GSU Nutritional Program. Checks or Money Orders should be mailed to: P. O. Box 82, Grambling, La. 71245.

### City of Grambling Water Department Issues Warning of ‘Wrong’ Sites for Paying Bills

The Water Department of Grambling wants Citizens to beware of paying their bills on the wrong sites online. Citizens should pay their water bills, property taxes and tickets at cityofgrambling.org ONLY. Once at the site, you will be directed to the payment page (ncount.com) where you can pay your bills. Several of these ‘wrong’ sites have cropped up lately according to the

Water Department. One such site is doxo.com. DO NOT pay your bills on this site. Once your money is gone, the City has no way to retrieve it so BEWARE!

### Councilwoman Has Started ‘Listening Post’ for Grambling citizens

Grambling City Councilwoman Delores Smith/Mayor Pro tem is available on the first Monday of each month, noon at Grambling’s City Hall for what she calls a “Listening Post.” Smith is available to listen to or answer city-related issues citizens may have. The listening post is a designated place and time to visit with Smith to get questions or concerns heard.

### Grambling Community Garden seek volunteers

Volunteers are needed for the Grambling Community Garden. If you are interested in lending a hand, contact DeVaria Ponton, master gardener. The garden is managed by Grow Grambling, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Ponton has the ability to grant volunteers hours and service-learning hours. Volunteers may contact Ponton at 318-278-9892.

### ‘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.

### HBCU Boosters to sponsor GSU quilt raffle

The HBCU Boosters will hold a quilt raffle. The raffle will be \$5 and the quilt will have a Grambling State University design. The drawing is scheduled for Sept. 5.

For more information or to receive a ticket contact Billy Norman, 318-497-0773; Henry Kelly 318-243-6123; Jim “Bear” Maryland, 318-607-2786; Carl McCarter, 318-235-6585 or Tommie Woods, 318-278-3163.

### Parish public transportation available to Grambling

The Lincoln Parish Public Transportation System (LPPTS) is available to the general public including the Grambling area. The system currently provides demand-response, curb to curb, non-emergency service and operates on a first call/come first serve reservation schedule. The service is handicap accessible.

Reservations are required 24 hours in advance unless prepaid and cancellations must be made two hours prior to pick-up time. For additional information please contact Samantha Dimmer, transportation coordinator 318-251-5138.

### Free food distribution set for Saturdays

The Lincoln United Community Coalition will be distributing free food for those who qualify each Saturday from 10 a.m. until noon. Food is distributed on first, third and fourth Saturdays from the Walmart retail store; second Saturday from the Northeast Louisiana Food Bank out of Monroe. Persons can come to the office at 407 N. Hazel in Ruston on distribution day at 9:30 to qualify. Plates are also sold for \$10 to help support the organization.

For additional information please contact Patricia Mims Brooks 318-265-2011 (office) or 214-662-5407.

### Lewis Family Reunion

On August 29 – 31, 2025, we will be celebrating and upholding our legacy that was left for us by our patriarchs with a Phillip, Sr. & Julia Lewis Family Reunion. Registration has closed for this year. If you did not register, please join us on Sunday, August 31st at 9:00 am for the Memorial service at Liberty Hill Cemetery followed by worship and fellowship at Liberty Hill Baptist Church.

Stay tuned for information regarding our next reunion!



James “Big Brown” Joseph unloading air units for the community

# Former Harlem Globetrotter Delivers Cool Relief to Grambling’s Elderly

Through his non-profit, the Big Brown Foundation, James “Big Brown” Joseph has made it his mission to serve elderly populations across Louisiana.

This latest initiative was made possible through a collaborative effort with Grambling’s Mayor Alvin Bradley. The air conditioner project was coordinated by Councilwoman Delores Wilkerson-Smith and supported by the Grambling City Councilmembers, John Brown-Jr., Cathy Holmes-Giles, Jerry Lewis, and DeVaria Hudson Ponton.

Mayor Bradley joined

Joseph and Rodney Spears of Grambling, and a local UPS driver, in assembly and installation of the units throughout the community. The hands-on involvement of this administration underscored the city’s commitment to community care and the power of public-private partnerships.

“This is more than just delivering air conditioners,” said Joseph. “It’s about delivering dignity, comfort, and compassion to those who’ve given so much to our communities.”

The Big Brown Foundation has become a beacon of hope for many, ex-

tending its reach far beyond Grambling. From Baton Rouge to North Louisiana, Joseph’s efforts have touched countless lives, reinforcing his legacy not only as a sports icon but as a humanitarian.

The participants praised the initiative, stating, “Big Brown’s compassion is unmatched. His work reminds us that real leadership is about service to our community.”

As temperatures rise, so does the spirit of generosity in Grambling—thanks to the enduring impact of James “Big Brown” Joseph and the Big Brown Foundation.



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# COMMUNITY



A Family Affair: (LtoR) Santis Cain, Makayla (Daughter), Sherita (Partner), Mackenzie (Daughter)

## Business in Spotlight: Cain Gang Restaurant

**By Lena W. Claybon**

It's late evening when I walk into the family-owned restaurant known for its Chicken and Waffles located right in the middle of the shopping center (near Office Depot) on the North Service Rd in Ruston. A few late evening diners are still enjoying their meals and being served more beverages by their young host, who I later find out is one of the Owner's daughters.

The Owners, Santis Cain and his partner, in life and in business, Sherita Hopkins, are in the back preparing a take out order and prepping for the next day. I immediately noticed how calm and laid back the atmosphere was and how clean and well-lit it was.

I also noticed how everything seemed to be running like clockwork with each fam-

ily member knowing their part in keeping things moving. This stood out to me because I knew they were coming up on their one year anniversary at this location (no small feat for a restaurant) and they were already operating like a well-oiled machine.

Once the Owners were able to take a break, we sat down to discuss this past year and getting to this point as well as their plans to celebrate their One year milestone.

GC: Tell me a little about your background first. Where are you guys from?

Santis: Well, me, I'm originally from Michigan City, Indiana. But my heart says Grambling.

GC: How long you been here?

Santis: About 45 years.

GC: So, you came here when you were young?

Santis: Yes.

GC: OK, so you're pretty much from here. (laughs)

Santis: That's why I said, "My heart says Grambling."

GC: OK, where are you from, Miss Sherita?

Sherita: I'm from Lake Providence, Louisiana.

GC: Really? How long have you been up here?

Sherita: Two years.

GC: Alright, well, tell me a little bit about the restaurant. What was your inspiration for it? Why Chicken and Waffles?

Santis: Well, I mean, really, it wasn't my concept. When I got my first place in Grambling, it was already Marlo's Chicken and Waffles previously so I just kept the concept going.

GC: So, you were in Grambling first? How long ago was that?

Santis: I started around 2010.

GC: And you were there for how long?

Santis: Seven years.

GC: Okay, and now you've been in business here coming up on one year?

Santis: Yes.

GC: All right. So, moving into that, I understand you guys have big plans to celebrate your one year anniversary so tell me about that.

Sherita: Since it's back to school time, we're going to do like a school supply giveaway. We're giving away, book bags, pens, pencils, erasers and things like that they're going to need. We're also giving away free cotton candy for the kids.

GC: That sounds wonderful! What inspired you to do that?

Sherita: It's just our way of trying to give something back to the community, just to let them know that we notice them

and hope they notice us. We also have our Cain Gang shirts available because everybody's been asking about them, so we finally got some made.

GC: When is the event?

Sherita: Saturday, August 9th from 2-5pm and we invite everyone out, especially parents with kids to take advantage of the giveaway.

GC: So, what are your plans like for the future of the restaurant?

Sherita: Oh, just hoping to keep it family-oriented, just trying to be a staple in the community. We just don't want to be a one-hit wonder where you're here today and then you're gone.

GC: Anything else you'd like to let the readers know about.

Sherita: Yes, you can rent our space for events, DJ parties. Karaoke, or dinner parties. We're here for it all.



(LtoR) Class of '72 Members: Bobby Dupree, Ida Faye Cheeks Perry Dillon, Barney Joe Mitchell, Ralph Hill

## Grambling High Class of '72 Lends "Helping Hands" to Community Service Project

The Grambling High Class of '72 volunteered their services for the recent Annual Back to School Community Service Project Event held July 19, 2025 at the Ruston Civic Center. The volunteers helped with coordinating the games with the children, assisting in making sure the children received their prizes as winners of the game.

They also helped with the set-up of the food area, and serving guests beverages with their food. Volunteers from the Class of '72 included: Ida Faye Cheeks Perry-Dillon, Ralph Hill, Barney Joe Mitchell, and Bobby Joe Dupree. In gratitude for their efforts, the Class of '72 received a big "Thank You" from the Bathsheba Chapter #10, Order of the Eastern Star (OES )of Grambling in affiliation with the Help Agency of Ruston.



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# CHURCH NEWS

## CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

### New Rocky Valley sponsors school workshop

A back-to-school workshop will be sponsored by New Rocky Valley Baptist Church and the Pinkie C. Wilkerson Life Development Center of Grambling Friday, August 1, from 8 a.m. until 1p.m. The theme will be “Preparing the Mind Body and Spirit for Life’s Challenges”.

The all grades (kindergarten – college) workshop will address topics such as God’s Four P’s, Drug use Prevention, Time Management, Study Skills, Peer Pressure, Bullying and What Can You do if Faced With an Armed Shooter?

All students will receive school supplies and a backpack after the workshop ends.

#### Mt. Sinai of Choudrant celebrates 142 years

Mt. Sinai Baptist Church will celebrate its 142nd Homecoming on Sunday, Aug. 3 at 11 a.m. and the theme is, “Building on the Solid Rock.”

Pastor Brandon Michael Dyer, Jr. and the Christ Temple Baptist Church Family of Ruston will serve as guest. The church is pastored by Reverend W. Lanier Bugs, located at 2269 Hwy. 145 in Choudrant.

#### Mt. Olive Mission to hold monthly meeting

The Mt. Olive Baptist Church Mission Department will hold its meeting Saturday, July 19, at 10 a.m. at the church.

The church is located at 571 Mt. Olive Rd. Grambling and Rev. Donald Young is the pastor. For more information contact Sharon Ford Dunn at (318) 614-4726.

#### Men’s Fellowship group to celebrate Jesus

The area Men’s Fellowship group will meet every second Monday of each month at the Memorial Funeral Home in Arcadia, Louisiana, located on 128680 LA-9 71001 from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. The

men only group gathers for strength, courage and knowledge.

The August meeting will be held on Monday, Aug. 11. The meeting is spearheaded by Patrick Jefferson, former state representative, along with invited speakers. Every man is invited to come and worship.

#### Love Chapel Baptist Church to hold anniversary/revival

The Love Chapel B.C. Family will hold church anniversary and revival starting Sunday, August 17, at 2 p.m. The speaker will be Reverend Oscar Hamilton Pastor, Pleasant Grove #1 B.C. of Tallulah, Louisiana.

The revival will be held Monday through Wednesday at 7 p.m. nightly. The speaker Monday, August 18 will be Rev. Julian Burns, pastor of Springville United B.C., Tuesday, August 19, Rev. Trevor Barber, pastor of St. Peter B.C., Ruston and Wednesday, August 20 - Rev. Johnny Dyes, pastor, St. Matthews B.C.

All area churches are invited to attend the services.

#### Church of Christ in Grambling Extends invitation

The Church of Christ in Grambling invites all to worship. Bible Study is held Sunday at 10 a.m. and morning worship at 11 a.m. Listeners may join online services by tuning into the YouTube channel, 146 King St. Church of Christ. Wednesday night Bible study begins at 7 p.m. The Zoom ID is 9744743562 and the church may be contact at Churchof-ChristatGrambling@gmail.com or 318-596-1038. The Church is located at 146 King St.

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

## Life reflections of Thelma Richardson

Thelma Powell Richardson was born on August 1, 1923, in Cuthbert, Georgia, the eldest of three children to the late Benjamin and Pearl Powell.

Mrs. Richardson earned her bachelor’s degree from West Virginia State University and her Master’s degree in Library Science from Syracuse University in New York.

She began her professional career at Grambling College as a Steno Clerk II in the Education Department, serving from September 1956 to June 30, 1958. She later joined the A. C. Lewis Library staff as assistant professor, eventually becoming coordinator of publications. She retired from Grambling State University on her birthday in 1984.

She was a devoted member of Lewis Temple C. M. E. in Grambling, Louisiana. In her early years, she found joy in playing the piano at church for special occasions.

She became a proud member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated,



Thelma Richardson

affiliating with the Epsilon Alpha Zeta graduate chapter in Grambling.

Ada Joseph, a member of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, remembered Mrs. Richardson: “Proverbs 31: 10 says ‘Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.’ So, it was with the young lady from Georgia who met her life soul mate in Texas. Whenever she spoke of her husband, she would call him Rich. He brought smiles, joy and comfort to her.”

Mrs. Richardson loved

to participate in water aerobics. When Mr. Richardson was no longer able to take her, Joseph would pick her up. Joseph recalled Mrs. Richardson being ever so humble and grateful. Always wanting to give her something, but Joseph would always let her know that she didn’t have to give her anything, explaining, “We are going to the same place, it’s not a problem.”

Joseph continued, “She loved Zeta Phi Beta Sorority. One year the Chapter decided to celebrate her birthday at her house. And she loved that celebration. She played the piano, we sung and enjoyed cake and ice cream. She also loved the Zeta shirt she was given.”

Joseph remembers meeting Mrs. Richardson in the Publications section of the A. C. Lewis Library on Grambling State University campus when she was a student. She was so helpful.” Joseph said, “I believe that was her life’s goal to be helpful to others and serve with a smile. The very quiet, small in stature, big hearted, lady let her life speak for her.”

## 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 Baptist Church**, 7349 Hwy 80. Ruston  
**Church of Restoration**, 285 Main St., Grambling  
**Cook Baptist Church**, 2000 Cooktown Rd, Ruston  
**Corinth**, 4327 Hw 545, Dubach  
**Countyline Baptist Church**, 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., Choudrant - One block south of Hwy. 80 in Choudrant  
**First**, Hico St., Dubach  
**First**, 200 S. Trenton St., Ruston  
**First**, Simsboro  
**Friendship Baptist Church**, 143 West Sixth Street, Bernice  
**Grace Baptist Church** 2808 Trenton Ave. , Ruston  
**Grace Bible Baptist Church**, 216 Rough Edge Rd., Ruston  
**Greater Pleasant Grove**, 1270 Golf Course Rd., Unionville  
**Greater St. Luke**, 163 St. Luke Church Rd, Arcadia  
**Gumspring Missionary Baptist Church**, 3117 Hwy 151, Farmerville  
**Hico**, 653 Hwy. 152, Dubach  
**Hopewell**, 7657 Fellowship Rd., Hwy 151, Dubach  
**Lane Chapel**, 1016 McAllister, Ruston  
**Lanes Chapel Missionary**, Hwy. 151 Downsview  
**Liberty Hill Missionary**, Simsboro Longstraw Baptist, 1799 Styles, Ranch Rd.,  
**Choudrant Love Chapel Baptist Church**, 1525 Sikes St, Ruston  
**Macedonia No.1 Missionary**, Rt. 2, Dubach  
**Macedonia No. 2**, 489 E. Sibley Rd., Choudrant  
**Mineral Springs**, 4599 Hwy 822, Dubach  
**Mount Harmony**, 2106 Mt. Harmony Church Rd, Ruston  
**Mount Calm**, 566 Mount Calm Rd., Simsboro  
**Mount Olive**, Grambling  
**Mount Olive Outreach**, 2817 S. Ser-

vice Road W., Ruston  
**Mount Pisgah**, Hwy. 3061, Ruston  
**Mount Sinai**, 2269 Hwy. 145, Choudrant  
**Mount Vernon Missionary**, 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 Pilgrim Rest**, Inc., 2697 Elm St., Arcadia  
**New Prospect**, 3438 Hwy. 167 N., Dubach  
**New Prosperity Baptist**, 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 Baptist Church**, 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 Baptist Church**, 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 Baptist Church**, 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 Baptist Church**, 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  
**Grambling**, 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 CHURCHES

**Ansley Union Church**, 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 CME**, 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 Methodist Church**, 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 of Ruston**, 1018 S. Vienna St., Ruston. lifepointruston.com  
**The Pentecostals of Ruston**, 2851 Hwy 33 North, Ruston  
**Power House 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  
**Dubach 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.  
**Lifechurch.LA**, 3000 S. Vienna St., Ruston  
**LifePoint Church of Ruston**, 1018 S. Vienna St., Ruston  
**Living Water Full Gospel Church**, 149 Fairgrounds Rd., Ruston  
**Miracle Temple COGIC**, 1405 S. Farmerville, Ruston  
**New Living Word Ministry**, 1900 Barnett Springs Rd. Ruston  
**New Testament Church at Grambling Inc.**, 508 Main St., Grambling  
**Praise Temple**, Ramada Inn, 107 Love Ave., Ruston  
**St. Paul Lutheran**, 504 Tech Drive, Ruston  
**The Bridge Community Church**, North Campus, 2301 N. Trenton, Ruston  
**Triumph The Church and Kingdom of God in Christ**, Hwy. 3061 E. Tenn. Rd., Ruston  
**United Faith Tabernacle Ministries & Prayer Center**, 303 Cherry St., Bernice,  
**Upon the Rock Outreach Center**, 513 E. Texas Ave., Ruston

*If you would like to have your church information listed, please email the Grambling Connection at gramblingconnection@gmail.com.*





# HEALTH & WELLNESS

## CHARMING’S CORNER

# “Open Your Mouth, Free Your Spirit: The Power of a Balanced Throat Chakra”

Let’s talk—not just about speaking, but about truth-telling. About expressing what’s inside without fear, shame, or the need to shrink for anyone’s comfort. This is about your throat chakra—the energy center that holds your communication, your truth, your self-expression, and your power to say what needs to be said in love.

Growing up in the African-American community, I saw so much get swept under the rug. Hurt feelings. Silent suffering. Generational trauma passed down like a family recipe. We were taught to keep the peace by keeping quiet. But unspoken truth turns into unspoken pain. And that pain builds up—in the body, in the heart, and in the spirit.

I made a decision that I wouldn’t carry that silence with me. I’ve learned to speak up—even when my voice shakes. Even when it’s uncomfortable. I’ve learned to express myself from a place of love, boundaries, and alignment. And I’ve also learned that I am not responsible for how others react

when I’m speaking my truth with clarity and care. What I am responsible for is protecting my peace, honoring my truth, and standing in my alignment.

### What Is the Throat Chakra?

The throat chakra, or Vishuddha, is located in the neck and is responsible for communication, expression, and truth. When this energy center is healthy and flowing, we speak clearly, listen deeply, and live authentically. But when it’s blocked, overactive, or shut down altogether, it shows up in ways that affect our mental, emotional, and physical health.

When your throat chakra is out of balance, you may experience:

- Chronic sore throats or tension in the neck and shoulders
- Difficulty saying how you feel
- Fear of confrontation
- Overspeaking, gossiping, or feeling the need to always explain yourself
- Feeling misunderstood, unheard, or emotionally stuck
- Repressed creativity



Charming Davis

### The Importance of Forgiveness

Let’s be clear: forgiveness is not for them—it’s for you. Holding on to anger or resentment not only affects your heart, it clogs your throat chakra and blocks your growth. When you forgive, you’re not saying what happened was okay. You’re saying you are ready to stop carrying the weight. Forgiveness frees your voice. It releases you from repeating pain in your mind and body.

### How to Start Opening Your Throat Chakra

- Practice affirmations like “I express my truth with love and clarity.”
- Journal your feelings and experiences—get them out of your body.
- Use herbs like peppermint, mullein, licorice root, and chamomile in teas or steams.
- Sing, hum, chant, or speak aloud to move energy through the voice.
- Wear the color blue, or meditate with throat chakra stones like lapis lazuli and aquamarine.

- Set boundaries—honoring your needs is an act of love.
- Speak truth gently, but firmly. Start small if you need to.

At Naturally Charming Universe Holistic Wellness Center, I offer healing sessions, throat chakra balancing, custom spiritual work, and holistic guidance to help you feel confident, safe, and clear. You don’t have to stay silent. You don’t have to keep carrying generational silence that was never yours to hold in the first place.

You can schedule a phone consultation with me today to begin the journey of opening your throat chakra and creating more peace and balance in your life. Let’s work together to release what’s been passed down and reclaim your voice—your power.

Your truth matters. Your voice matters. And it’s safe to use it now.

Naturally Charming Universe Holistic Wellness Center. Address: 311 Main Street, Grambling, Louisiana 71245

- Phone: (318) 789-5393
- Business Hours: Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- Saturday: 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

# Amputations Among African-Americans Disproportionately High

LaVar Ball, father of two pro basketball players and a rapper, was hospitalized for an undisclosed illness and underwent an amputation due to a blood infection caused by diabetes. The condition is part of an “epidemic” of Black Americans losing limbs due to diabetes, with Black Americans up to four times more likely to lose a limb than whites, and many of the amputations being preventable. The top three risk factors for PAD are diabetes, high blood pressure, and use of tobacco products, which disproportionately affect underserved Black and Latino communities.

In an essay published last year in SLAM magazine, Ball disclosed that he had been hospitalized and his right leg was partially amputated “due to not paying attention to my diabetes.”

In addition to being one of the 4.9 million Black American adults diagnosed with diabetes, Ball’s harrowing illness put him at the center of what some researchers are calling an “epidemic”: a growing number of Black people losing limbs because of the disease.

According to the American Diabetes Association Amputation Prevention Alliance, some 154,000 Americans with diabetes undergo amputation each year, a number that researchers say is on the rise.

But researchers also found that Black Americans are up to four times more likely to lose a limb than whites, that many of the amputations were preventable, and that amputees in general are more likely to have a shortened life span.

Amputations become



LaVar Ball

necessary, experts say, when a patient suffers PAD their circulation is diminished or blocked in organs or extremities with small blood vessels, such as feet. Poor circulation, in turn, can lead to numbness, or neuropathy, which can block pain from cuts or other wounds.

If those undetected wounds become infected, gangrene and other potentially deadly infections can develop, forcing the need for an amputation.

PAD is a serious medical condition that can also lead to stroke, heart attacks and, in some cases, death. It causes blockage in the vessels that carry blood from the heart to the legs and affects more than 12 million Americans.

The top three risk factors for PAD are diabetes, high blood pressure, and use of tobacco products.

These common chronic health conditions disproportionately affect underserved Black and Latino communities, yet almost 7 in 10 respondents to a survey conducted last year were not familiar with the disease.

Nearly 80% of Black and Hispanic respondents reported they have never had a discussion with a doctor or healthcare provider about PAD.

Yet a recent survey has found that while millions of Americans have cardiovascular disease or diabetes, very few are aware of peripheral artery disease, and even fewer have ever had a discussion about it with a medical professional.

PAD causes blockage in the vessels that carry blood from the heart to the legs and affects more than 12 million Americans. Leading risk factors

for PAD are the common chronic health conditions that disproportionately impact underserved communities.

“These new insights are particularly concerning among those most at risk and come at a time when a staggering 1 in 20 Americans over 50 years of age experience PAD,” said Dr. George D. Dangas, president of the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography & Interventions, and a professor at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City.

The PAD Pulse Alliance Survey, which came out in February, polled 2,000 Americans to learn about their level of awareness of disease symptoms, risk factors, and overall doctor-patient communications around PAD. The survey included responses

from 1,000 Black people and Hispanics, which is important given that both populations are at a higher risk of developing PAD and related complications.

Other studies show that higher concentrations of PAD occur in communities that also suffer from high stress and deprivation, which is also common in many underserved Black communities. Exacerbating the issue: little or no access to nutritious food options and areas to exercise also play an important role.

“We believe that exposure to more distressed circumstances and more access-to-care barriers increases your risk of getting the disease and also getting detected later for the disease,” says Dr. Kim G. Smolderen, an associate professor of

medicine and psychiatry at Yale University School of Medicine. “There is a lot of unawareness that is still happening not only in the general public, but also in the medical community that needs to be addressed.”

“The disturbing variations in PAD prevalence, treatments and outcomes underscore another perilous consequence of the health equity gap in managing chronic conditions,” said Foluso Fakorede, MD, CEO of Cardiovascular Solutions of Central Mississippi, co-chair of the Association of Black Cardiologists PAD Initiative. “It’s critical to increase awareness among racial and ethnically marginalized communities and the providers who serve to close the gap.”

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# ARTS & CULTURE

## A Tribute to Malcolm-Jamal Warner: The Brother We Grew Up With

By Lena W. Claybon

When the news broke that Malcolm-Jamal Warner had passed away at 54, it felt like losing a family member. For those of us who grew up in the '80s and '90s, watching *The Cosby Show* wasn't just entertainment — it was a ritual, a reflection, a hope. And at the center of that experience was Theo Huxtable, the charming, sometimes mischievous, always lovable middle son, played so brilliantly by Malcolm.

To us, he wasn't just Theo — he was our big brother, cousin, best friend. He fumbled through teenage years on-screen the way we did in real life. He made mistakes, learned lessons, and showed that young black males could be smart, sensitive, funny, and loved. In a world that often portrayed them one-dimensionally, Malcolm gave us a fuller image. And for that, we loved him deeply.

His tragic death — drowning off the coast of Costa Rica — is difficult to process. It's hard to imagine someone so full of life, so meaningful to generations, gone in an instant. According to reports, he was caught in a rip current while visiting Cocolos Beach in Limon, Costa Rica. Bystanders tried to save him, but he was declared dead despite their efforts. The of-



Malcolm Jamal Warner

Santiago Felipe/Getty; Alan Singer/NBCU Photo Bank/NBCUniversal/Getty

ficial cause: asphyxia. He died far from home, but he never stopped feeling like home to us.

Malcolm was more than Theo. His talent carried him through decades of rich, meaningful work — from Malcolm & Eddie to Reed Between the Lines, and most recently, *The Resident*. He wasn't content with just being remem-

bered as a child star. He evolved. He directed. He made music. He earned a Grammy. He created poetry that spoke to our spirits. He co-hosted a podcast that gave voice to mental health in the Black community — a conversation we desperately need.

But through it all, Malcolm remained grounded. Humble. Human.

He once said in an interview, "If I die tomorrow, I know I would go with a smile on my face." That quote now echoes like a farewell letter — one filled with grace and peace.

What made him special wasn't just his resume, it was his quiet dignity. The way he carried the weight of being a Black role model, even when he

didn't ask for it. He embraced it. He honored it.

Malcolm-Jamal Warner's legacy isn't only in reruns or awards. It lives in every Black kid who dared to dream bigger because they saw someone like Theo Huxtable on TV. It lives in the conversations about masculinity, vulnerability, creativity, and healing that he pushed forward —

even up until this year.

To me — to many of us — he wasn't just an actor. He was a thread in the fabric of our growing up. A symbol of what we could be. Losing him hurts, but we'll carry his light, his laughter, his lessons — always.

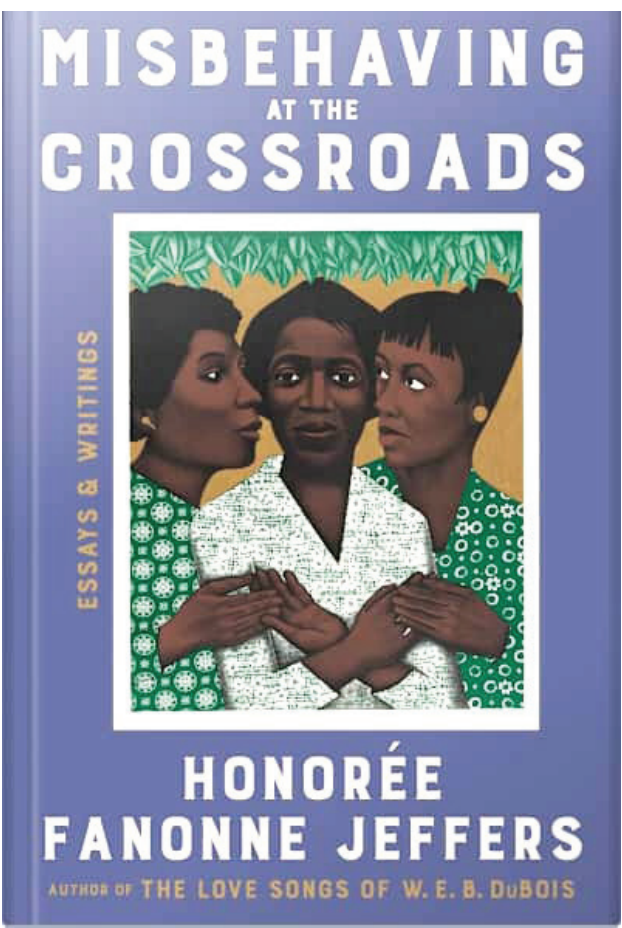
Rest well, Brother Malcolm. You were seen. You were loved. And you will never be forgotten.

## A look at 'Misbehaving at the Crossroads'

In Honorée Jeffers newest book, *Misbehaving at the Crossroads*, Jeffers, the acclaimed poet and novelist, has written her first nonfiction collection, consisting of 42 essays, poems, letters, and other writings. Each piece is different, but there is a throughline in these writings; they are collectively about the challenges and crossroads of being a Black woman.

These writings also emphasize the importance of being a womanist and a feminist, as well as a truth teller to the powers that be, whether they are white poet gatekeepers or former leaders of the free world. Other pieces are about the societal expectations Black women are expected to keep, such as embracing the patriarchy in a marriage, tending to the needs of the extended family, pretending as if everything is alright when secrets are kept in the dark, and not showing others when they're exhausted.

Jeffers comes from a lineage of misbehaving Black women, including her late mother, Dr. Trellie Lee James Jeffers, who is the central figure of this book. It is through her lineage that Honorée Jeffers is an unapologetic person who



knows her worth. Some may call this vain or arrogant, but that could not be further from the truth. In a world where Black women are disrespected, underrecognized, and underappreciated, one must toot their own horn to get the respect, recognition, and appreciation that they deserve and have worked so hard for.

Jeffers reveals vulnerability in the pages of this

book as she shares intimate and personal details about her life. This takes courage, and it takes bravery to do this; she does not disappoint or shrink from the fight. There is power in these writings that hit you in the gut.

In Biblical numerology, we are taught that the number seven symbolizes completion, à la the six days that God cre-

ated the cosmos, Earth, and its inhabitants, and rested on the seventh day. It seems fitting and somewhat ironic that this seventh book is coming at a time when Jeffers is retiring from full-time teaching. Jeffers is at another crossroads in her life, one in which she can take the road that has more freedom to write

additional works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry that uplift the lives of Black women, or the other road where she quietly rests on her laurels and enjoys her retirement.

If this book has taught me anything is that Jeffers will take the former road rather than the latter. Her formal teaching

career may have ended, but she will continue to educate her readers on the history of this country, how Southern Black and Indigenous people built this nation, and she will continue to speak up for the vulnerable and the marginalized. She will continue to misbehave, and we are all the better for it.



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# SPORTS

## Ellis Baseball Camp draws crowd despite weather

By Joice M. Dunn

The 14th annual Wilbert Ellis Baseball Camp took place at Fraser Field in Ruston despite the inclement weather in the area. The camp was free to all families with children ages 4-15.

After welcoming over 280 campers last year, Coach Ellis, the Hall of Fame icon in Grambling, Ruston, Lincoln Parish, State of Louisiana and beyond, expecting another strong turnout, failed a little short.

"I set a number goal to achieve each year, but it's not about the numbers, it's about the campers and their families," explained Ellis.

As Coach Ellis opened the camp for business with words of welcome and thanks to all involved. He paused to give honor to four men and their family members present: Robert 'Demp' Smith, first Black coach at Ruston High; Benjamin Williams, served on championship team as assistant to Coach Ellis, as well as instructor for the camp; Dr. Richard Ballard, worked as physician for the athletes and Johnny Maxwell, a friend before the camp and during the camp. He played an extreme part of keeping the camp going but now have passed on.

Santora Black, General Manager for Hitz Radio, served as MC, lifting the spirits of the crowd and keeping events on point.

The campers were given shirts at registration and later broken down in groups to go through instruction drills.

Grambling State head baseball coach Davin Pierre lead the instruction portion of the camp, splitting campers up into age groups.

Instructors included Pierre, GSU assistant baseball coach Pe-



The little Wilbert Ellis Baseball Campers get some play time.



The Wilbert Ellis Baseball opening session.

rez Knowles, and former GSU and MLB players John Lewis, Ralph Garr, Ronnie Lewis, Bobby Dupree, Gary Eave, and Ira Tuell, among others. The instructors used their skills learned as players of college ball, minor or major leagues to set the basics for the campers. The camp also used skills of current GSU baseball players fresh off winning the SWAC Tournament title and Lincoln Prep volunteer players.

Between the showers, the campers continued to sharpen their knowledge

of the baseball game.

Parents of the campers received some enrichment time of their own. Present to enlighten and encourage parents of the campers were a variety of companies.

Many present learned that Landon Hut of the Lincoln Parish Sheriff's Office, offers a three-day camp for sixth - eighth graders.

Chris Burney, DART representative, let the group know that the company serves a seven-parish area free for men and women.

The Grambling Juneteenth Queens made an appearance to welcome the campers.

A representative for the Tax Assessor's office passed out information about Homestead exemption and the 65 Freeze plan. Mental health services (Rising Care Counseling) were also present. The Boys and Girls Club representative explained the Prime time for trouble among young people. There were Ministers, pastors and judges to offer assistance when needed. Patrick Jefferson made

a stop by the camp to offer his words of encouragement to campers by letting them know They Matter, They Can and They Will, before its closing ceremonies.

"I feel the Wilbert Ellis Baseball Camp was a great Success with just under 300 participants. It was exciting to see them win baseball gloves, headphones, bicycles and even new school laptops. While several parents won new televisions as well. Thanks to all our community sponsors," said Morris Winters, Local business

owner, Morrison Graphics.

"The camp was definitely a success and a great experience for all. The opportunities Coach Ellis and his amazing staff are offering the youth is definitely character building and an overall fun experience," said Jamila Dominguez, program director/digital media director of Hitz 96.3

"The importance of this camp is to connect the community we all live and work in. Kids get to connect with athletes to learn life skills outside of sports such as discipline, instructional learning and they get to have fun doing it. There are so many resources available for people to learn about and use," explained G. Denise Dupree, former Grambling City Council woman.

Door prizes were given during the closing ceremonies, but only those who registered and remained on site for the camp were eligible to win. Door prizes were given to each camp level as well as adults.

Sponsors for the camp included True Care Dental, LLC., Squire Creek, HBCU Boosters, Ruston Housing Authority, 22 HandsUp, Wings Stop (Ruston/Monroe), Origin Bank, Louisiana National Bank, JPMS, LLC. among others.

## Hall Resigns as Head Coach of Grambling State Softball

GRAMBLING, La. | Grambling State University softball head coach Nakeya L. Hall has announced her resignation



Nakeya L. Hall

as head coach of the GSU softball program. GSU Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics Dr. Trayvean D. Scott announced that a national search for the next leader of the Grambling State softball program will begin immediately.

"On behalf of Grambling State University and our entire athletics department, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to Coach Hall for her years of service, leadership, and unwavering commitment to the growth of our softball program and our student-athletes," said Scott. "Her efforts both on and off the field have helped shape the lives of many young women, and her presence within our program has made a mean-

ingful difference. We are thankful for the passion and perseverance she brought to Grambling, and we wish her nothing but continued success in the next chapter of her journey."

Hall coached the Lady Tigers for seven seasons, winning 119 games and posting the second highest winning percentage in program history (.424). In 2023, she led the Tigers to the SWAC Championship game, the first time GSU had advanced that far since 2001. Also, during the 2023 season, the Lady Tigers won 33 games, which tied for the most wins in a single season in program history.

During her tenure at Grambling State, she produced seven All-SWAC selections, including the 2025 SWAC Player of the Year Kamryn Broussard and the 2023 SWAC Freshman of the Year Cadashia Collins.

By: Curtis Ford, Associate AD for Athletic Communications

GRAMBLING, La. | The Grambling State University football team will have eight of its football games streamed on the newly announced SWAC TV streaming platform during the 2025 season.

The Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) announced its brand new and exclusive streaming service, SWACTV, on last Wednesday afternoon at the 2025 SWAC Football Media Day in Birmingham, Ala.

The Tigers open the season on SWAC TV when GSU faces Langston in the Shreveport Kick-off Classic on Aug. 30. Kickoff for the that game is set for 7 p.m. CST.

Two weeks later, Grambling State begins a stretch of three consecutive weeks on the streaming platform. The Tigers hosts Kentucky State (Sept. 13) and East Texas A&M (Sept. 20) before heading to Dallas, Texas for the 100th State Fair Classic versus Prairie View A&M on Sept. 27. All three games kickoff at 6 p.m.

On Oct. 18, GSU returns to SWAC TV when the G-Men travel to Arkansas-Pine Bluff for a 2 p.m. start.

The Tigers close its SWAC TV slate with a pair of early November home games against Alabama A&M (Nov. 1) and Bethune-Cookman (Nov. 8). Both games are slated for 2 p.m. kickoffs.

In addition to games on SWAC TV, Grambling State will appear on television and streaming services four more times. GSU's week two match-up at Ohio State on

Sept. 6 will be aired on Big Ten Network.

Grambling State's Oct. 11 homecoming game against Texas Southern is set for a 6 p.m. start on ESPN+.

The G-Men return to HBCU-Go on Oct. 25 when the G-Men take on defending HBCU National Champion, Jackson State, in the Las Vegas HBCU Classic at 3 p.m. PST.

The 52nd Bayou Classic versus Southern will broadcast live on NBC at 1 p.m.

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GRAMBLING STATE FOOTBALL

2025 TV SCHEDULE

## Grambling State Football to have Eight Games Streamed on Newly Announced SWAC TV