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# THE GRAMBLING CONNECTION

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www.GramblingConnection.com

## Black Mayors Denounce Trump's Deployment of National Guard in Cities citing "Worst Game of Racially Divisive Politics"

### Staff Report

Following President Donald Trump's deployment of the National Guard to Washington, D.C., in August 2025, several Black mayors have denounced his actions and threatened to block similar military takeovers in their own cities. They argue the deployments are a racially divisive political tactic, unnecessary, and undermine successful local crime-reduction efforts. The mayors of cities such as Baltimore, Chicago, Oakland, and New Orleans have publicly pushed back against federal intervention.

### Denunciations of Trump's actions

Black mayors and leaders have raised several points of contention with Trump's use of the National Guard:

Politicizing crime: Ma-

yors have accused the Trump administration of "playing the worst game of racially divisive politics" by suggesting that other cities with Black mayors could be next in line for a National Guard deployment.

Contradicting data: Some mayors, such as Baltimore's Brandon Scott and Savannah's Van R. Johnson II, have cited data showing declining crime rates in their cities and pointed out that Trump is ignoring their successful local public safety strategies.

Federal overreach: The mayors of Oakland, New York City, and Chicago have all stated that they will not allow federal law enforcement or the military to take over their cities, arguing that the president lacks the authority to federalize local policing.

Undermining local efforts: Savannah's mayor, Van R. Johnson II, said



Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson address press conference

that deploying the National Guard could "destabilize" and "undermine our public safety efforts," while Oakland's mayor, Barbara Lee, feared military intervention would undermine progress and create an "environment of fear".

Hypocrisy in targeting cities: New Orleans City

Council member Helena Moreno claimed Trump was engaged in "scare tactics and politicizing public safety" by targeting cities with Black mayors, while ignoring cities with similar crime issues led by mayors aligned with him.

### Examples of mayors fighting back

Several specific instances highlight the resistance from Black mayors:

#### Baltimore

Mayor Brandon Scott publicly stated that his city is "good" and does not want or need the Na-

tional Guard. In response to a negative social media post from Trump about Baltimore, Governor Wes Moore and Mayor Scott pointed to data showing the city was the safest it had been in 50 years.

#### Chicago

Mayor Brandon Johnson signed an executive order instructing the Chicago Police Department not to cooperate with federal law enforcement or military personnel in immigration enforcement or crime crackdowns.

#### Oakland

Mayor Barbara Lee vowed to resist a military occupation of her city, viewing it as an effort to "dismantle democracy".

#### New Orleans

City council members and mayoral candidates vowed to fight any federal takeover, calling Trump's plan an "attack on certain cities".

See **Black Mayors** Page 2



Gov. Jeff Landry announces plans for Radiance Technologies to build a secure microchip packaging facility in Lincoln Parish during an Aug. 25, 2025, news conference at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston. (Photo courtesy of the Governor's Office)

## Military microchip facility in Ruston to hire 150 workers

(La. Illuminator) Gov. Jeff Landry announces plans for Radiance Technologies to build a secure microchip packaging facility in Lincoln Parish during an Aug. 25, 2025, news conference at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston.

Gov. Jeff Landry announces plans for Radiance Technologies to build a secure microchip packaging facility in Lincoln Parish during an Aug. 25, 2025, news conference at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston. (Photo courtesy of the Governor's Office)

A military contractor

plans to build a microchip packaging facility in North Louisiana that will hire 150 employees at an average salary of \$85,000, Gov. Jeff Landry announced this week.

Radiance Technologies will spend more than \$370 million to construct a 40,000-square-foot facility north of the Ruston Sports Complex that will house research, development, design and fabrication operations for microchips.

The Huntsville, Alabama-based company already has existing locations in Shreveport and

Baton Rouge.

The governor joined company leaders, state and local officials Monday at Louisiana Tech University to reveal Radiance's plans.

"This new secure microchip facility not only strengthens our national security, it also positions North Louisiana as a hub for advanced manufacturing, bringing new jobs and technical expertise that allow us to embrace higher education partnerships and new possibilities," Landry said in a news release.

See **Military** Page 2

## Charles Blow to Deliver Inaugural Address for The Grambling Vanguard Speaker Series

GRAMBLING, La. — Acclaimed columnist, New York Times bestselling author, and political commentator Charles Blow will serve as the inaugural speaker for The Grambling Vanguard, the university's new presidential initiative designed to spotlight bold ideas, creativity, and courageous leadership.

Curated to inspire action and provide a cultural and intellectual environment where ideas become catalysts for change, The Grambling Vanguard features three signature elements—the Speaker Series, the Vanguard Award, and a new podcast premiering in January 2026—bringing world-class artists, scholars, and practitioners to campus each semester while extending the institution's tradition of excellence through action, leadership, and engagement on campus and beyond.

The first installment of the Grambling Vanguard Speaker Series will take place on Wednesday, September 18, 2025,



Charles Blow

at 6 p.m. in the Digital Library and Learning Commons at Grambling State University. Sponsored by Louisiana National Bank, the event is free and open to the public, but advance registration is required at gram.edu/vanguard.

"Charles Blow's voice resonates across the nation for its clarity, courage, and candor," said Grambling State President Dr. Martin Lemelle, Jr. "His ability to confront the most pressing issues of our time while inspiring thoughtful dialogue makes him an ideal choice to open The Grambling Vanguard."

Blow is currently an

Op-Ed columnist for The New York Times and previously served as the paper's Graphics Director, leading the team to multiple awards. He has also held positions at National Geographic Magazine and The Detroit News. His bestselling memoir, Fire Shut Up in My Bones, won a Lambda Literary Award and the Sperber Prize, and was adapted into a groundbreaking opera at The Metropolitan Opera—the first by a Black composer. His second book, The Devil You Know: A Black Power Manifesto, calls for an end to systemic racism and has sparked national dialogue.

In addition to his writing, Blow is a sought-after commentator on politics and society, appearing on platforms such as The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, MSNBC, CBS News, and SalonTV. His advocacy for social justice, racial equity, and mental health continues to generate impactful conversations that challenge perspectives and inspire change.



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# OPINION

## Guilt by Coloration, Not by Association

By Prentiss Smith

I've spent most of my life in this country with the quiet awareness that I could be mistaken for a threat before I ever open my mouth. Not because of anything I've done — but because of what I look like. Because I wear a certain skin. Because I move through the world in a Black man's body.

We've heard the phrase guilt by association — the idea that being around the wrong people can get you in trouble. But for many of us, the more pressing danger is guilt by coloration. When your facade, not your behavior, is enough to make you a suspect. When your exterior says more to the world than your words ever could.

I've seen it up close. I've lived it. I've been followed in stores, questioned without cause, and looked at sideways in neighborhoods where people assumed I didn't belong. And I'm one of the "lucky" ones — college-educated, soft-spoken, professionally dressed. I've spent over 30 years as a columnist and commentator. But even with all that, I've learned: the suit doesn't erase the suspicion. The degrees don't cancel out the discomfort others feel in my presence.

We live in a country where certain faces are assigned meaning. The "angry Black man." The "loud Black woman." The "dangerous-looking kid in a hoodie." These aren't just stereotypes — they are weapons. They shape how people respond, how institutions react, how laws are enforced, and how justice is denied.

You don't have to know the wrong person or be in the wrong place. You just have to look like you could be a problem. That's all it takes. And once that image sticks, innocence has to be proven, not assumed.

This plays out in tragic headlines and quiet humiliations. It played out when Trayvon Martin was followed

and killed. When Philando Castile was shot during a routine traffic stop. When shoppers are trailed in high-end stores. When a Harvard professor is arrested trying to get into his own house. When a Black child is disciplined more harshly at school for behavior that others are simply warned about.

And still, we hear, "Well, if you just dressed differently..." or "If you spoke a little more softly..." As if the burden is always on us to change — not on the system, not on the assumptions, not on the eyes doing the judging.

But as elderly man, I've lived long enough to know that no amount of compliance makes you immune. Respectability doesn't save you when guilt is painted onto your skin.

We have to stop pretending this is about behavior. It's about perception. And perception, when unchecked, becomes policy. Becomes policing. Becomes prison. Becomes pain.

I'm a husband, a father of four, and a grandfather of six. And I'm tired of seeing each new generation carry the same burden. Tired of telling our sons and daughters that they must do more just to be seen as good enough. Tired of teaching survival instead of thriving.

Guilt by coloration is not a personal problem. It's a national sickness. One that seeps into every institution and every interaction. And until we confront it for what it is — not just bias, but injustice — we will keep seeing Black and Brown lives reduced to shadows of their full selves.

Justice is supposed to be blind. But too often, society peers through tinted glasses — and we're the ones who pay the price.

It's time to stop asking us to change how we look and start asking why people still see us through a lens of fear. It's a question I suppose we will never know the answer to. And that's my take. smithprent@aol.com

**Black Mayors** From Page 1

Washington, D.C.

Mayor Muriel Bowser has publicly opposed the deployment of the National Guard to her city, questioning the need for it given current crime statistics. D.C. has also sued the Trump administration over the deployment.

**The legal and historical context**

The debate over the National Guard deployments raises historical and legal questions about the relationship between military forces and civilian law enforcement.

Recent precedent: A federal judge ruled in September 2025 that the Trump administration broke federal

**Military** From Page 1

The new facility expands Radiance's existing presence in Ruston, where it's a tenant at Louisiana Tech's Enterprise Campus research park. The company has tapped into the university for faculty expertise, trained graduates and students seeking hands-on experience.

"This partnership is a win-win opportunity that will benefit Radiance, Tech, Ruston and the entire state," Radiance CEO Bill Bailey said in a news release from the Louisiana Economic Development agency.

law by deploying the National Guard to Los Angeles in June to respond to anti-ICE protests. The judge found the deployment violated the Posse Comitatus Act, which prohibits using the military for civilian law enforcement.

Previous deployments: National Guard deployments during the 2020 George Floyd protests were also controversial, with many questioning the use of trained military personnel to monitor peaceful protesters.

These recent events showcase ongoing tension over executive power, the appropriate use of military forces in domestic policing, and concerns that these deployments disproportionately target minority-led cities.

To secure the project, the state has agreed to provide \$20 million to the Louisiana Tech University Foundation to buy equipment for Radiance at the new manufacturing facility. The funding will be tied to undisclosed project milestones.

Louisiana Economic Development will also give \$17 million to Louisiana Tech to upgrade its research equipment and create specialized training programs in secure chip manufacturing.

Construction on the Radiance facility is expected to begin next spring with completion anticipated in summer 2027.

### POTTER MOTIVATION

## Elevate Above the Noise

By Rusty Potter

Believe it or not, the only bird that dares to attack an eagle is a crow. The crow will swoop in, land on the eagle's neck, and begin pecking at its neck. Annoying. Relentless. Distracting. The eagle doesn't waste its time or energy fighting back. It doesn't turn around and engage in a battle with something so far beneath its capacity. The eagle simply rises.

Instead of flapping in frustration or retaliating, the eagle spreads its wings and soars higher into the sky. The higher it climbs, the thinner the air becomes. Soon, the crow cannot handle the altitude. It gasps for air, loses strength, and eventually falls away — not because the eagle fought back, but because the eagle elevated.

That is a life principle worth holding onto. Many of us are dealing with people who criticize, doubt, gossip, or try to derail us from our purpose. It can occur in the workplace, in businesses, in schools, or even within family and social circles. The temptation is to respond, to defend yourself, to engage in battles that ultimately only drain your energy. But like the eagle, your best response is not retaliation—

it is elevation.

Success has no face, no color, no age limit, and no fixed value. Success is personal. It is defined by you, not by those who try to measure your worth against their own insecurities. If you are working hard, staying true to your values, and walking in your purpose, you are already successful. Don't let the noise of others make you forget who you are or where you're going.

Elevation doesn't just mean achieving material wealth. It means refusing to be dragged into negativity, gossip, and petty disputes. It means recognizing that your future is too important to waste on proving yourself to people who are determined not to see your value.

So let them talk! Let them peck. Let them circle. The air where you are headed is too thin for them. They cannot survive where you are going. Every step you take toward growth, discipline, and excellence is another foot of altitude gained. Every time you choose peace over drama, focus over distraction, and perseverance over quitting, you climb higher.

Stay motivated. Stay driven. Stay elevated. Be like the eagle, the best way to silence the crows is not by fighting them, but by flying beyond their reach.



Rusty Potter



National Alliance on Mental Illness

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# COMMUNITY



## Coalition gives awards and dedicates academy

By Joice M. Dunn

The Lincoln United Community Coalition (LUCC) held an awards ceremony honoring those who have contributed to their non-profit programs in the community, as well as held a dedication for their new Alana Gilbert Belton Business and Leadership Academy on Saturday, August 30, 6 p.m. at the Coalition Building on 407 N. Hazel Street in Ruston.

The LUCC, using the theme "We Are Better Together," is moving forward to draw in all people in the area to work together.

In terms of how it all started, Patricia Mims Brooks, secretary of LUCC, explained, "Michael Brooks after leaving Ruston, left the washateria building vacant. My husband (Troy Brooks) decided he wanted to use the building for our Brooks Insurance Brokers, LLC business. Therefore, we renovated the building and made it our office to provide Medicare Advantage Plans, Supplement Plans, Life Insurance of all types to the people of Ruston."

The Brooks had only been in the area for a year before being approached by Pastor Wayne Buggs to start a Non-Profit 501(c)3 to combat some of the crime concerns in the area by providing programs for young people as a deterrent.

"We started with the Food Distribution. To enroll in our Food Program that is income-based, an applicant just needed to come in the office, fill out an application to see if they qualify. Then we added Tutoring. After finding funding, a year later, we began our Etiquette program for boys and girls, 9-14 years of age," Brooks said.

"We started with small beginnings, a meeting of a few to begin a dream of making our community better. We received our IRS approval letter August 3, 2023. Shortly after that, we started our feeding program at Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church. Then we started our Tutoring/Education at the Lincoln Parish Library.

"With excitement," Brooks said, "A call was made to my husband, Troy Brooks, Sr., offering LUCC this location (we're in now). With much PRAYER, we moved into our very own building here at 407



The 40 Women of Distinction receives presentation

N Hazel Street in October 2024. We started our Etiquette Program, Ladies Club with girls in April 2025 and added Boys, Gentlemen by Design in July 2025. We've done a lot in a short time," she explained.

Awards were presented to many for their hard work and dedication. The LUCC awarded Regina Buggs the Most Outstanding Coordinator of Education for 2024/2025 and Tiana Freeman, Co-Director, received the Excellent Program Implementation and Design for Etiquette Ladies Club & Gentlemen by Design 2025. Ariel Buggs got the 2025 Distinguished Design Excellence Award.

Awards for tutoring was given to Sariah Buggs, Juan Hooper and Mariah Engrum for the Most Outstanding Tutor of Education for 2024/2025.

In the Etiquette category, Brianna Williams was awarded Excellent Delivery of Dining Etiquette for 2024/2025 and Saudia Scott received Excellent Delivery of Etiquette for Ladylike Presence for 2024/2025. The Excellent Delivery of CPR Training for Gentlemen by Design 2025 went to Tommie Woods.

Other awards included Troy Brooks, Sr., for the Most Outstanding Financial Strategist/Operations for 2024/2025; Pastor Ed Smith, Most Out-



John and Alana Belton

standing Board Facilitator for 2024/2025; Sidney Buggs, Most Outstanding Dining Facilitator for 2024/2025 and Patricia Mims-Brooks, Most Outstanding Executive Administrator for 2024/2025.

In Recognition for Top Volunteer Organizers for 2024/2025 went to Adanna Ogbogu and Steven Gilbreath. The Most Generous Donor Benefactor Award (2024/2025) was given to Gary Stokley, Billy McGinnell, Sarah McKinney, Donald Day, Drake Mills of Origin Bank, Bill Hogan, Jessica Straughter of CenturyNext Bank; Logan Hunt; Next

Hunt; Benny Crump; Pastor Joe Henderson; Pastor Brian Mercer; Atty Pamela Stewart; Mayor Ronnie Walker; Adam Ewing and Frank Cordaro. The Most Outstanding Generous Donor Benefactor Award 2024/2025 was John Belton.

Donna Faulkenberry/Food Bank Northeast Louisiana was named Most Outstanding Food Distribution Facilitator for 2024/2025.

Excellent Delivery of Finances & Boys Relationship with Girls for Gentlemen by Design 2025 was given to Pastor Deterian Gipson.

The following people were

recognized for Most Outstanding Food Distribution Award for 2024/2025 to JoAnn McDonald, Lozell Goldsmith, Roselle Goldsmith, Jerome Brooks and Alonzo Jenkins. Ethan Buggs was presented with the Most Outstanding Dedication Award for 2024/2025 and Big O.K. Brooks, Jr., was given the Most Outstanding General Technologist Award for 2024/2025.

The academy accepts 30-40 students for the Tutoring Sessions, which will grow to 100 if needed and we'll enhance with more teachers, according to Brooks. She continued to say that the Etiquette Programs take 15-20 Girls and Boys, 9-14 years old, each Quarter we provide the Classes. There is no criteria for either session. Parents can enroll their child by going online to [www.thelucc.org](http://www.thelucc.org) click the Tutoring Sessions. For Etiquette, they go to the website [www.thelucc.org](http://www.thelucc.org), select Ladies Club or Gentlemen by Design to enroll.

Phase two of the project is underway. "We are making plans for our Alana Gilbert Belton Business and Leadership Academy, getting it established and moving forward getting the buildout of the area.

There will be Financial Literacy Classes and we are building our Board of Directors," explained Brooks.

## Announcements

### NAACP will hold monthly meetings on third Thursday

The Grambling Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) #604B will host its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, Sept. 18, 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, Sept. 18, 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.

Anyone at least 18 years old may RSVP to [jones79aka@yahoo.com](mailto:jones79aka@yahoo.com) or call 93180 (318) 614-1961 or [SJBurch57@gmail.com](mailto:SJBurch57@gmail.com) or call (318) 350-1612. The meetings are free to the public and all are invited to attend.

#### North Louisiana residents to receive additional code

A new 457 area code is being introduced to North Louisiana residents as an additional area code, not a replacement, in the existing 318 region, including

Ruston, Monroe, Bossier City, Shreveport, Alexandria, and the surrounding area.

The Commission said the "overlay" of an additional area code will not change any existing 318 numbers. Beginning Sept. 25, newly assigned phone numbers in the region may begin with the 457-area code. The change is necessary to ensure a continuing supply of phone numbers in the growing 318 region.

#### 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, Sept. 15. For additional information please contact Collins at 832-891-7488 or [WWW.REALLYGREATSITE.COM](http://WWW.REALLYGREATSITE.COM).

#### 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](http://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](http://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

#### 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 more information, please contact Patricia Mims Brooks 318-265-2011 (office) or 214-662-5407.

#### 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.

#### Parish public transportation available to Grambling

The Lincoln Parish Public Transportation System (LPPTS) is available to the 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.

# COMMUNITY



Booster members Carl McCarter (l) and Billy Norman (r) hold up quilt.

## HBCU Boosters making a difference in the community

By Joice M. Dunn

The Boosters held their quilt raffle drawing Friday, Sept. 5, and the winner of the Grambling State University design custom homemade quilt was Brent Kelly.

"A special thanks to all in the community and out of state who purchased raffle tickets in support of the Boosters. A special thanks goes to Carl McCarter, Henry Kelly, Billy Norman, Roger Phillips, Tommie Woods, and Mary Kelly for your outstanding work on this project," said Maryland.

The HBCU Boosters, since the organization came together in 2022, has touched many local and national areas as well



Pictured is the needed equipment for Lincoln Prep.



as individuals.

James Maryland, president, named the group and right away they began fund raisers of all kinds to support the Ralph Garr Classic in Atlanta. Garr, a GSU graduate, played professional baseball for the Chicago White Sox, California Angels as well as the Atlanta Braves.

Most of the members of the group started out helping others in their own way, but coming together has allowed them to be able to support and encourage more people, young and older as well as various organizations.

The club recently donated to the success of the Lincoln Parish Branch NAACP Fish Fry and donated football equipment to Lincoln

Prep High School. They also supported Marco Riley's Basketball Team; Ruston Jr. High's Football Team; GSU's Baseball Team; the Lincoln Parish NAACP Scholarship Fundraising Banquets and Annual Fundraising Fish Fry. The organization has donated funds to needed families for furniture purchase.

Maryland believes some members of the Boosters didn't have the support they needed growing up, and they feel it is their duty to make sure that those who come after them do. "People that are really interested in the betterment of our youth is what the organization is looking for," he said.

New members are joining every day.

**THE GRAMBLING CONNECTION**

**1st ANNIVERSARY**

The Grambling Connection Turns 1 — And We Need You!

For the past year, The Grambling Connection has been your source for timely, accurate, and trusted local news—covering Grambling, the University, Simsboro, Arcadia, Gibsland, and Ruston.

We launched to connect the community and give Grambling the voice it deserves. But keeping our paper free for the community and expanding our coverage takes more than dedication—it takes support.

That's why we've started the Friends of The Connection Program and we invite you to join. For just \$10/month, you'll:

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**THE GRAMBLING CONNECTION**

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If you are interested in writing for us, please reach out and let us know! Prefer someone with writing experience for newspaper, news sites, blogs or websites. Send us a letter of introduction and your resume to: [gramblingconnection@gmail.com](mailto:gramblingconnection@gmail.com)

[www.greatergramblingcc.org](http://www.greatergramblingcc.org) Greater Grambling Chamber of Commerce

**14th Annual Community Contributions Banquet**

**Save the Date**

**October 16, 2025**

Black & Gold Room  
Grambling State University Campus

6:00 PM Wine & Cheese      7:00 PM Dinner & Awards

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS \$50      TABLE (8 TICKETS) \$400

[www.greatergramblingcc.org](http://www.greatergramblingcc.org)

**2025 Chamber Honorees**

Education Award <i>Mrs. Aleane Hayes</i>	Government Award <i>Mrs. Cathy Holmes Giles</i>	Business Award <i>Mr. Lawrence Rogers</i>
Community Service Award <i>Ms. Karen Ludley</i>	Special Recognition Award <i>The Grambling Connection</i>	
Young Entrepreneur Award <i>Ms. Deirda Scott</i>	Social Justice Award <i>Mrs. Veda Emerson</i>	





# CHURCH NEWS

## Why is Christianity the dominant religion among African-American in the United States

### Staff Report

Christianity became the dominant religion among Black people in the United States primarily through the profound and complex experience of slavery and the development of the independent Black church. While initially resisted, Christianity was adopted and transformed by enslaved Africans, becoming a source of hope, resistance, and community that continued to be central to African American life for centuries.

### The role of slavery and conversion

Initial conversion efforts: Although some Africans brought to the Americas were already Christian (especially Catholic from the Kongo region) or Muslim, most first encountered Protestant Christianity in North America. During the First and Second Great Awakenings of the 18th and ear-

ly 19th centuries, evangelical preachers, particularly Baptists and Methodists, actively proselytized to enslaved communities with messages of spiritual equality and redemption.

Slaveowner resistance and manipulation: At first, many slaveowners resisted efforts to convert the enslaved, fearing that Christianizing them would imply equality and encourage rebellion. Colonial laws were passed to explicitly state that baptism did not grant a person freedom. Later, many slaveholders saw a strategic advantage in promoting a version of Christianity that emphasized obedience to masters and the promise of a heavenly reward for a life of suffering. They often used selective biblical passages, such as Colossians 3:22, to reinforce control.

African Americans' interpretation and adaptation: Enslaved people were not passive recipients of this faith. They developed their own interpretations, often finding inspiration in biblical narra-

tives of liberation, such as the story of the Exodus. They held secret religious meetings, known as "hush harbors," to worship freely, mixing evangelical teachings with African religious traditions. These spirituals and clandestine services provided a psychological refuge and a way to communicate hope and defiance.

### The rise of the independent Black church

Autonomy and segregation: After the American Revolution, independent Black churches emerged as freedmen and enslaved people sought autonomy from the segregated white congregations that restricted their roles and leadership. These separate Black denominations, such as the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, became the focal points of Black community life.

Center of community life: Following emancipation, the Black church became the most important institution in African

American communities, serving a multifaceted role that went far beyond spiritual guidance.

**Political and social hub:** Because it was often the only institution fully controlled by Black Americans, the church became a crucial organizing hub for political and social advancement.

**Community resource:** Churches provided essential services, including educational programs, financial assistance, and social support. Many historically Black colleges and universities were founded in association with churches.

**Leadership incubator:** The church provided a platform for Black ministers to develop into community leaders, such as Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., and offered a moral foundation for social justice activism.

### The Civil Rights Movement

During the Civil Rights Era of the 1950s and 60s, the Black

church's foundational role became instrumental to the movement's success.

**Organizational base:** Churches provided meeting spaces for strategy sessions and rallies. Organizations like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) were formed through the network of Black churches.

**Moral and spiritual guidance:** The church framed the struggle for racial equality as a moral and religious crusade, using Christian teachings to model nonviolent resistance.

**Mobilization:** Church networks were used to mobilize participants for boycotts, marches, and voter registration drives, providing logistical and financial support.

The enduring legacy of the Black church as a sanctuary, a site of resistance, and a community pillar is the primary reason Christianity remains the dominant religion among Black people in the United States.

## Church Announcements

The Mt. Olive Baptist Church Mission Department will hold its meeting Saturday, Sept. 27, 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 Chapel 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 meeting is spearheaded by Patrick Jefferson, former state representative, along with invited speakers. Every man is invited to come and worship.

### Love Chapel to hold Family and Friends Day

The Love Chapel Baptist Church of Ruston will hold Family and Friends Day on Sunday, Sept. 28, at 11 a.m. at the church. Rev. James Martox, Sr. and the Union Baptist Church Family will serve as special guest.

The church is located at 1525 Sikes Street, Ruston and Rev. Elliott Abney is the pastor.

### 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 ChurchofChristGrambling@gmail.com or 318- 596-1038. The Church is located at 146 King St.

## 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  
**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  
**Laues Chapel Missionary**, Hwy. 151 Downsville  
**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**, 210 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 C.C.C. 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](http://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](http://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](mailto:gramblingconnection@gmail.com).

# HEALTH & WELLNESS



## CHARMING'S CORNER

# Power in Your Core: Healing the Solar Plexus Chakra

By Charming Davis

Just above your navel lies a fiery energy center—the solar plexus chakra. This is the seat of your personal power, confidence, will, and inner strength. It's where you decide who you are and how you show up in the world. When your solar plexus is strong and balanced, you walk with confidence, speak with clarity, and trust yourself to make decisions that honor your life path.

But when this chakra is blocked, dim, or overactive, you may feel powerless, insecure, or unsure of your direction. You may give your power away to others, hide your gifts, or constantly seek approval. On the other side, you may find yourself pushing too hard, overcontrolling, or burning out.

Signs of a Blocked Solar Plexus Chakra

- Low self-esteem or constant self-doubt

- Fear of failure or rejection
- Trouble making decisions
- Digestive issues or tension in the stomach area
- A need to control everything or everyone
- Anger, resentment, or frustration
- Feeling like life is happening "to you" instead of through you

### Why the Solar Plexus Chakra Matters

In many families and especially in African-American culture, we've been taught to "stay in our place" or to shrink so others feel comfortable. Generationally, this dimmed light has left us forgetting the power within. But healing the solar plexus is about reclaiming your right to stand tall, to live boldly, and to lead your life without apology.

When balanced, your solar plexus chakra brings:

- Confidence and healthy self-esteem



Charming Davis

- A strong sense of purpose
- Clear decision-making
- Motivation to reach your goals
- Resilience through challenges
- The courage to speak your truth without fear

### How to Heal and Strengthen Your Solar Plexus Chakra

- Work with fire energy—light candles, sit in the

sun, or use visualization of golden flames

- Eat nourishing yellow foods like bananas, corn, squash, or pineapple

- Work with herbs and spices such as ginger, turmeric, chamomile, and rosemary

- Meditate with crystals like citrine, tiger's eye, or pyrite

- Speak affirmations such as: "I am powerful. I am confident. I am enough."

- Practice activities that build your strength—yoga, breathwork, or core exercises

- Take ownership of your choices and stand firm in your decisions

At Naturally Charming Universe Holistic Wellness Center, I help guide you back to your power. Through teas, chakra oils, Reiki, and spiritual coaching, we can unlock the solar plexus energy that may have been buried under fear, insecurity, or generational silence. You can also schedule a phone con-

sultation with me today to learn how to step back into your confidence and reclaim your inner fire.

### Your Power Belongs to You

No one else has the right to dim your light. No one else can tell you who you are. Healing the solar plexus chakra means standing strong in your truth, shining your light, and living in alignment with your highest self. When your power center is balanced, you don't just survive—you thrive.

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.

# September: Suicide Prevention Month

By Jeannette Stephens-Jones

Now is the time to start the conversation by asking someone this simple question: how are you doing? And please be willing to listen to what is being said. This can save lives.

September is suicide prevention month and it is important that we raise awareness, spread hope and let someone know that they are not alone. Healing is possible. Suicide is considered one of the most urgent mental health issues of our time. According to National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), like any other mental health condition, suicidal thoughts can affect anyone, no matter the age, gender

or background. Suicidal thoughts should never be viewed as normal for they signal deep emotional pain that deserves understanding as well as professional support.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States and in 2023, 49,316 Americans died by suicide. Research also suggests that 46% of people who died by suicide had a known mental health condition and that other factors may put a person at risk of suicide, such as:

- A family history of suicide
- Substance use: Drugs can create mental highs and lows that may worsen suicidal thoughts.
- A serious medical illness



Jeannette Stephens-Jones

- **Intoxication:** Reports from CDC indicated that 1 in 5 who died by suicide had alcohol in their system at the time of death.
- Prolonged stress
- A recent tragedy or loss
- **Gender:** it is reported that more women than men attempt suicide; however, men are four

times more likely to die by suicide.

### What are some warning signs of suicide?

It is challenging to recognize if an individual may be considering suicide. The National Alliance on Mental Illness reports the following as common warning signs of suicide:

- Giving away personal possessions
- Talking as if they're saying goodbye or going away forever
- Taking steps to tie up loose ends
- Making or changing a will
- Stockpiling pills or obtaining a weapon
- Preoccupation with death
- Sudden cheerfulness or calm after a period of despondency

Steps to take if you

think someone is thinking about suicide

If you are concerned that someone is thinking about suicide, taking action is always the best choice.

Find out whether the person is in danger. Ask direct questions, for example:

- How are you coping with what's been happening in your life?
- Are you thinking about dying?
- Are you thinking about hurting yourself?
- Do you ever feel like giving up?
- Are you thinking about suicide?

It is important to address a mental health crisis like suicide quickly and effectively, just as you would any other health emergency. The month of September re-

minds us that every life matters and we should be willing to listen, learn and take action. By doing so, we can help prevent suicide and offer help to those who are struggling.

If someone you know is struggling or in a crisis, call or text 988 or go to a hospital emergency room, or chat 988lifeline.org to reach the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Resources  
www.webmd.org  
www.nami.org  
www.nimh.gov  
www.mayoclinic.org  
www.helpguide.org  
Jeannette Stephens-Jones, Ed.D., is a retired educational diagnostician/speech pathologist and president of NAMI Ruston. Contact her at jones79\_aka@yahoo.com.

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# ARTS & CULTURE



## Local Barbershop Offers Book Club for Local Kids

By Lena W. Claybon

Visiting The Signature Touch Barber Gallery in Grambling is an experience in and of itself. With its chic design and elegant décor, you would almost think you're in a swank Los Angeles salon but this is not where it ends. They also offer another unique experience that you don't find at most barbershops. They offer the Barber Book Club, a free literacy initiative where kids can come and pick up books, new and used, to take home and read.

The mission is simple: to create a space where barbering and books come together, making reading accessible, fun, and part of the barbershop experience. "We want every child who walks through our doors to feel not only welcome, but also encouraged to pick up a book, dream big, and believe in themselves," says Owner, Malcolm Beavers. "We're excited about it. It's open to everyone, and the goal is simple: to make reading fun, accessible, and a natural part of the barbershop experience. The best part is, there's no need to return the books. Once a child takes a book home, it's theirs to keep."

The Signature Touch Barber Gallery and the Barber Book Club is the brainchild of both Malcolm and his wife, Sharice. The name, Barber Book Club, comes from a combination of inspiration and purpose. All of Sharice's grandparents were educators, and growing up she often heard conversations about how many children didn't have access to books outside of school. Her mother always pushed the power of reading, instilling in her the belief that a love for books can build confidence, curiosity, and lifelong learning.

"Before our son Jagger was born, we purchased



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for The Signature Touch Barber Gallery



A couple of book club readers

the entire Dr. Seuss collection for him. As soon as he could read, we went through every book together. When we shared the idea for the Barber Book Club with him, Jagger immediately offered to donate his entire collection so that other kids could enjoy it too. That moment really inspired us to move forward," said Sharice.

Malcolm is originally from Monroe, Louisiana, and Sharice grew up in Orlando, Florida. Although they met in Dallas where their partnership took root, they said opening the barbershop here in Grambling feels "full circle." "It allows us to bring our experiences back home to Louisiana, honor Malcolm's roots, and contribute to a community that values connection, culture, and tradition. We're excited to build something meaningful right here in Grambling," Sharice mused.

Malcolm is an Army veteran who proudly served 10 years, including two

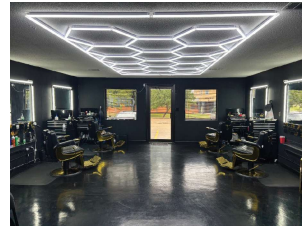
deployments. Even while serving, he always had clippers in his hand, cutting hair for fellow soldiers and sharpening the gift that would later define his career. A graduate of Wossman High School in Monroe, he stayed close to his Louisiana roots as he built his path. After his military service, he pursued his passion full-time and now has over a decade of experience in the beauty industry.

His professional journey began at Cloyd's Barber School in Monroe and continued through the Paul Mitchell Cosmetology program, followed by advanced studies at the Ogle School of Aesthetics. He went on to complete the Paul Mitchell Barber Academy in Los Angeles and further specialized in male unit installations through advanced training in Houston. Over the years, he has continued to refine his craft with additional training, ensuring he stays at the forefront of modern barbering techniques.

With this strong foundation, Malcolm offers more than a traditional cut, specializing in permanent enhancements like man unit installations, along with hot towel treatments and hair washes that elevate the client experience. His dedication and talent have even given him the opportunity to cut for a few celebrities.

When asked what inspired him to open his own shop, he stated, "I was inspired to open a barbershop because I wanted it to be more than just a place for haircuts, I wanted to create a space where people feel confident, respected, and connected. Growing up, the barbershop has always been a hub for community and conversation, a place where stories were shared and relationships were built. I wanted to bring that same energy back, but with a modern, professional touch."

My passion for precision and creativity in grooming gave me the foundation, but the big-



Inside The Signature Touch Barber Gallery

ger vision was about entrepreneurship and service, building something that represents excellence, culture, and community pride right here in Grambling. For me, the barbershop isn't just about style, it's about creating a legacy and giving the community a space they can truly call their own."

Sharice brings over a decade of corporate experience in human resources and operations, backed by a bachelor's degree in Human Resources. She is also an entrepreneur, having owned a wedding planning service that showcased her ability to organize, create, and deliver meaningful experiences.

That same skill set now helps her drive community outreach for the barbershop, ensuring it stays connected and engaged with the people it serves. Alongside her professional expertise, she has a passion for serving others through volunteering and community outreach. While she works more behind the scenes, her leadership and commitment to the community ensure that the barbershop is grounded in professionalism, care, and connection.

The Beavers have been in business since July of this year and have already begun to make their mark in the Grambling community. From the very beginning, their vision was to create a barbershop that blends comfort with professionalism, a modern, welcoming space where

everyone feels at home. Whether it's a quick trim or a full transformation, every visit is more than just a haircut — it's The Signature Touch. "Our goal is to provide a top-notch service while also offering a place where people can connect, relax, and leave looking and feeling their very best," said Malcolm.

The Beavers said they'd love the community's support in helping spread the word so the free books from The Barber Book Club can reach as many families as possible here in Grambling. Donations of new or gently used books are welcome anytime during business hours, with a special focus on titles for kids, teens, and young adults. For those who'd like to contribute directly, they've also created an Amazon Wish List on their website, making it easy to send books straight to the shop.

They've already garnered the support from partners like GBT Bank, Friends of the Lincoln Parish Library, and Goodwill Litching, who are helping them bring the vision to life. Ultimately, the Barber Book Club is about planting seeds of literacy and leadership, building confidence, and creating connections, one book at a time.

Doors are open Monday through Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Located at 302 College Ave, Grambling, LA. All are welcomed.

## Spike and Denzel's New Film is a Streaming Sensation

Staff Report

Highest 2 Lowest, the latest Spike Lee joint starring Denzel Washington is officially a streaming sensation after taking over the charts on one of the biggest platforms last weekend, Apple TV+. The film had an early release in theaters after debuting at the Cannes Film Festival this past May.

Highest 2 Lowest is the 5th installment of a long history of collaboration between the two men which began in 1990 with Spike's *Mo' Better Blues*. In it, Denzel plays a jazz musician whose rocky personal life threatens his playing career.

35 years later, they're at it again but this time it's a modern reimagining of Akira Kurosawa's 1963 classic *High and Low*, also, set in New York. Denzel plays David King, a legendary record label boss whose company, *Stackin' Hits*, is on the verge of being sold off. Just as he makes a bold move to reclaim control of the label, his son is kidnapped—or so he thinks. Turns out, it's actually his godson (the driver's son) who's been taken, and the kidnappers

are demanding David's entire fortune. That dilemma sets the stage for the rest of the movie, blending corporate drama, family loyalty, and an intense crime thriller.

Here's what works: Denzel is Denzel. At 70, he's still magnetic, and the film shines brightest when it leans into his conflicted, aging-mogul character.

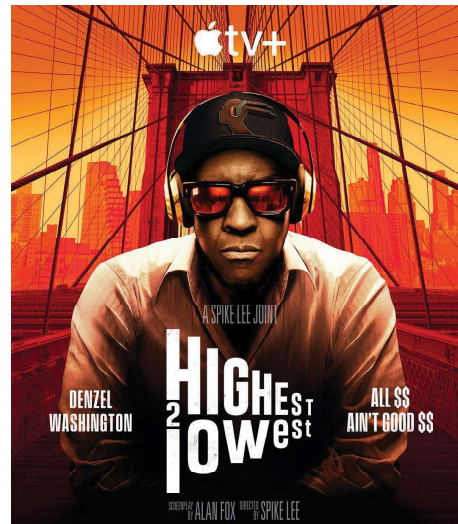
Jeffrey Wright steals scenes. As the driver whose son is kidnapped, he brings depth and quiet intensity.

ASAP Rocky pops. He plays the villain, and his face-off with Denzel is electric—half generational clash, half rap battle of personalities.

Spike Lee's love letter to New York. From subway chases to parade sequences, the city is alive and pulsing, captured beautifully by cinematographer Matthew Libatique.

Music touches that land. The needle drops—like "Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now"—hit that nostalgic, feel-good nerve.

Here's what doesn't: It drags. Even though it's technically shorter than Kurosawa's original, it feels longer. Some scenes are bloated, and transitions between the



character drama and the crime-thriller parts are clunky.

Too much Spike-ness. Lee loves throwing everything at the screen—parade footage, musical

interludes, Easter eggs, fourth-wall breaks—and sometimes it works, but other times it feels self-indulgent and distracting.

Odd choices. The score

often sounds out-of-date (like an '80s elevator track), and there are strange bits of dialogue that make you wonder if the script glitched.

Supporting characters

wasted. Ifenesh Hadera, as Denzel's wife, mostly gets stuck looking glamorous and worried. Even some celebrity cameos (Rosie Perez, Ice Spice, etc.) feel underused.

Heavy-handed themes. The showdown between Denzel and Rocky sets up big questions about old-school music vs. new digital platforms, but the script states it so bluntly it doesn't feel like real conversation.

The Bottom Line Highest 2 Lowest isn't Spike Lee's best, but it's definitely ambitious. The visuals, the cast, and the sheer energy of having Lee and Denzel back together after nearly 20 years are hard to ignore. But it's messy—sometimes inspiring, sometimes frustrating.

If you're a fan of either Spike or Denzel, you'll probably want to see it on the big screen just for their performances and the New York vibe. If you're hoping for a tight, flawless thriller, you might walk away wishing it had been edited with a heavier hand.

In short: it's not a masterpiece, but it's got enough firepower to make it worth considering. Streaming now on Apple TV+.



# SPORTS

## GSU Men's Basketball to Play in 2025 Chris Paul HBCU Classic

By: Curtis Ford, Associate AD for Athletic Communications

GRAMBLING, La. | For the second year in a row, the Grambling State University men's basketball team will compete in the Chris Paul HBCU Classic. This year's tournament will be held at the Gateway Center Arena in Atlanta, Ga. On Dec. 18-19.

The Tigers, led by first-year head coach Patrick Crarey II, will face Norfolk State of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) at 7:30 p.m. ET on Dec. 18 and Hampton of the Coastal Athletic Confer-

ence (CAA) at 5:30 p.m. ET on Dec. 19.

This year's contest with NSU will be the third meeting between the Tigers and Spartans in the Chris Paul HBCU Classic. Last season, GSU fell 76-70 to NSU. In the 2021 Chris Paul HBCU Classic, Grambling State lost another close battle to Norfolk State 70-63.

Tickets for the 2025 Chris Paul HBCU Challenge will go on sale at a later date.

Details surrounding broadcast information and credentials will be announced at a later date. For more information, please visit hoopball.com.



## Grambling State Falls to No. 1 Ohio State

**Grambling State Athletics**  
COLUMBUS, Ohio | The No. 1 ranked and defending College Football national champion Ohio State proved to be too much for Grambling State, as the Tigers fell 56-0 on Saturday afternoon at Ohio Stadium.

GSU (1-1) totaled 166 yards of total offense. The Tigers ran for 97 yards with Andre Crews leading the way with 38 yards on five carries.

Grambling State threw for 72 yards. C'Zavian Teasett played the first half, going 9-of-13 for 55 yards and an INT. Ashton Frye took over quarterback duties in the second half, going 2-of-7 for 17 yards.

The G-Men committed three turnovers on the day, an interception and two fumbles. GSU's de-

fense registered an interception in the second quarter.

The Buckeyes scored on their first three drives, to open a 21-0 lead with 4:10 to go in the opening period.

Grambling State drove inside the OSU 19-yard line with, but the drive stalled forcing the Tigers to attempt a 36-yard field. Theodore Caballero attempt sailed wide right, keeping the score set at 21-0 with 14:26 remaining until halftime.

The Buckeyes made the Tigers pay for the miss, driving 80 yards in 6 plays for another TD. OSU's Julian Sayin connected with Jeremiah Smith on 9-yard TD pass with make it 28-0 with 11:38 on the clock.

Tyrell Raby provided a spark for the GSU defense when

picked off Sayin's pass at the Tigers' 1-yard line with 8:01 on the clock. Grambling State couldn't capitalize, however, punting the ball back to OSU.

The Buckeyes added one more touchdown before halftime to make 35-0 at the break.

Ohio State continued to put up points in the second half, scoring five more touchdowns over the final two quarters.

The Buckeyes gained 651 yards of offense, with 377 of those yards coming via the passing game.

**UP NEXT**  
Grambling State gears up to host Kentucky State in the home opener at Eddie G. Robinson Memorial Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 13. Kickoff is set for 6 p.m. and will be broadcast on SWAC TV.



## US Open honors Althea Gibson 75 years after breaking barriers

Staff Report

The 2025 US Open pays tribute to tennis legend Althea Gibson, the first Black player to compete in the tournament 75 years ago.

On Wednesday, August 27, the tribute to the late professional tennis star crescendoed with a stirring performance by Florida A&M University's famed Marching 100, celebrating their alumna in high-stepping style, the Tallahassee Democrat reported.

It was one highlight in a two-week celebration of the iconic player who broke barriers 75 years ago as the first Black player in what is now known as the US Open. The tributes included Gibson's image displayed throughout the stadium, a special tournament logo marking "75Years of Breaking Barriers," and short films about her career narrated by Venus Williams that aired between matches.

"The most important part is that we are celebrating it and recognizing it because Althea accomplished so much," Williams said, per AP News. "A lot of it has not been given the credit it deserves and the attention and the praise."

Speaking to the same

outlet, fellow tennis champ Billie Jean King added, "Personally, I feel like everybody's waited too long to really celebrate her."

She added, "She was the first, and when you're the first, you should be celebrated the most."

Gibson, born to sharecroppers in South Carolina before relocating to Harlem, was more than a champion; she was a trailblazer. After becoming the first Black player to compete in what is now considered the US Open in 1950, she won 11 Grand Slam titles, including back-to-back victories at Wimbledon and the U.S. Nationals in 1957 and 1958.

Her victories didn't stop on the tennis court. Later, she became the first Black competitor on the Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour. Her impact extended beyond sports into music and film, though her story too often slipped from the spotlight.

Today, her influence is alive in the many Black women who have picked up rackets since her reign. From household names like Williams or Coco Gauff to rising stars like Taylor Townsend and Hailey Baptiste, their presence underscores Gibson's lasting legacy.

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