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THE GRAMBLING ★ CONNECTION

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Grambling Legend Doug Williams Honored with Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award

Staff Report

By the time this article runs, the NFL legend and Grambling great Doug Williams will have received the prestigious President’s Lifetime Achievement Award, recognizing his decades of service, leadership, and dedication to uplifting Black communities. The honor was presented at a ceremony hosted at Howard University on Saturday, August 9, 2025.

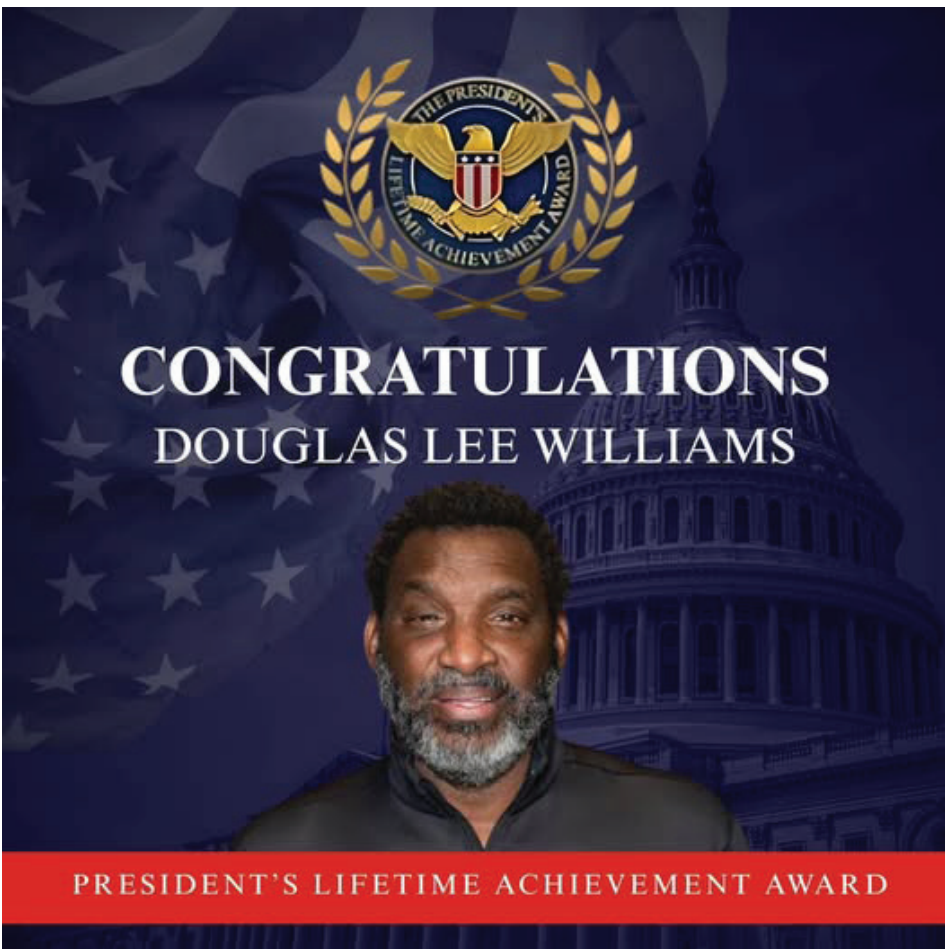
This recognition isn’t just for what Doug Williams did on the football field—it’s about the impact he’s made beyond it. Williams is best known for making history as the first Black quarterback to start and win a Super Bowl, earning MVP honors in the process. But before the big game and the bright lights, Williams was shaped by his experi-

ence at Grambling State University which laid the foundation for his leadership, confidence, and resilience.

His connection to Grambling, as well as other HBCUs, has never wavered. From athlete to executive, mentor to movement-builder, Williams has consistently used his platform to elevate youth.

The President’s Lifetime Achievement Award is the highest level of recognition given to Americans who have dedicated over 4,000 hours to volunteer service and community impact. And for Williams, that’s just scratching the surface.

Over the years, he has worked to support: Youth mentorship programs, Mental health awareness, Workforce development for young Black professionals and Career and leadership pipelines for



HBCU graduates.

His work has impacted thousands—and he’s still not done. Alongside fellow Grambling great James “Shack” Harris, Williams co-founded the Black College Football Hall of Fame and the HBCU Legacy Bowl, both designed to spotlight HBCU talent on a national stage.

Through these efforts, over 400 HBCU student-athletes have gained exposure to professional scouts, media, and business leaders. But it’s not just about sports. Williams also helped create the Legacy Bowl Career Fair, which connects HBCU students with employers, internships, and scholarship opportunities.

It’s the kind of work that reminds us: being an HBCU legend isn’t just about being first—it’s about giving back.

See **Grambling** Page 2

Louisiana Cell Phone Ban While Driving Is Now In Effect

Last month, Gov. Jeff Landry signed House Bill 519 by Rep. Brian Glorioso, R-Slidell, that bans most cellphone and other wireless communication use while operating a motor vehicle that went into effect August 1, 2025.

According to the Louisiana Illuminator, the new law prohibits phone use during driving except for voice calls on hands-free systems, including wrist-worn devices such as the



Apple Watch, and looking at a hands-free navigation system.

The hands-free exception doesn’t permit all usage of

a cellphone while driving. The law still prohibits most texting and emailing even when the phone is paired to a remote system. It outlaws driving while “accessing, reading, viewing, composing, browsing, transmitting, saving, or retrieving electronic data” from any phone app unless it’s for voice calls or navigation.

In a phone call Tuesday, Glorioso said the intent of the law is to prohibit phone use when-

ever it creates a distraction and requires looking away from the road.

The ban doesn’t apply to the use of a phone when the vehicle is stationary or when making calls to report traffic collisions or emergencies. It also contains exceptions for emergency officials, first responders and certain professional drivers who use radios or communication devices affixed to their vehicles.

See **Louisiana** Page 2

City of Grambling Briefs:

New Hires for City include:

- Ronnie Skinner, Fire Department
- Jarrious Jackson, Police Department
- Tyronne Miller and Latario Lloyd, Public Works Department

New Grants for City of Grambling

The city received a \$50,000 LGAP (Louisiana Government Assistance Program) grant aimed at street repairs.

The city was also awarded a \$10,000 matching grant from Keep Louisiana Beautiful which will be used in part for a new “Welcome to Grambling” sign according to the Mayor.

See **City** Page 2

GSU Leaders Aim to Strengthen University and Community Ties

GRAMBLING GATHERS:
STRATEGIC CONVERSATION
& COMMUNITY CONNECTION

AUG 10 KICKOFF EVENT:
COMMUNITY BRUNCH | 1 PM
WEDNESDAYS AT 11 AM

AUG 13 MAYOR ALVIN BRADLEY

AUG 20 ATHLETICS

AUG 27 STUDENT AFFAIRS

SEP 3 ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

SEP 10 ACADEMICS

REGISTER TO ATTEND:
GRAM.EDU/COMMUNITY

GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY

MODERATOR
Martin Lemelle, Jr., D.B.A.
President, Grambling State University

Staff Report

The President of Grambling State University is conducting a series of conversations for the community to attend entitled, “Grambling Gathers: Strategic Conversations & Community Connection.”

These “Grambling Gathers” events, which will be held at 11 a.m. on Wednesdays in August and September inside the Digital Library and Learning Commons, are aimed at facilitating dialogue on key focus areas and involve the community in shaping the university’s future. The conversations will address important aspects of the university’s direction and development, allowing for community input and feedback.

Lemelle opened the community brunch kick-off event by presenting an overview of the university before talking about current institutional highlights at the university, including the launch of the Grambling Research and Resource Foundation (GR2).

“We’ve done really well in state appropriations in this last (legislative) cycle,” Lemelle said. “We had \$6.7 million for a new indoor athletic (practice) facility that’s coming on board soon, and additional \$1.5 million to support our operations.”

“But that pie, as we build out the revenue, needs to continue to diversify, and so research, including \$9.8 million in funding, helps us think about the full pie. That portfolio is led by (Vice President for Research and Sponsored

Programs) Theodore Callier, and so he and his team help us think through those opportunities at the federal level, with private foundations like The Mellon Foundation, and others, to advance Grambling State University as a research institution.”

The remaining events focus on specific departments and community input include • August 20 – Athletics and Advancement with Dr. Trayvean Scott and Brandon A. Logan • August 27 – Student Affairs with Dr. Rudolph Ellis • September 3 – Enrollment Management with Tasha Heard • September 10 – Academic Affairs with Dr. Connie Walton. All events are free and open to the public.

See **GSU** Page 2

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OPINION

There’s an Epidemic of Domestic Violence and the Killing of Women

By Prentiss Smith

There is a war raging in this country—silent, insidious, and far too often ignored. It doesn’t play out on foreign soil or flash across our screens in dramatic headlines. It happens behind closed doors, in kitchens and bedrooms, in front of children, and in the homes of women who dared to believe they could be safe.

The recent murder of Corinthian Shepherd—a mother of four sons, a hardworking woman who had clawed her way into what we call a “good neighborhood”—has struck me deeply. She wasn’t just another name in a news report. She was my neighbor. I knew her. I knew her boys. I watched her work, strive, sacrifice. And now, I’ve watched her become another grim statistic—taken from this earth by a man who once professed to love her.

This isn’t an isolated case. It’s part of a pattern—an epidemic. The leading cause of death for pregnant women in America isn’t illness. It’s homicide. Every year, thousands of women are brutalized or murdered by someone they once



Prentiss Smith

trusted. And all too often, they see it coming. They go to court, seek restraining orders, ask for help. But a piece of paper can’t stop a man determined to control, to harm, to kill.

Mrs. Shepherd did everything “right.” She left. She got a home. She tried to raise her boys in a safe place. But when a man becomes obsessed, when his ego is bruised by rejection or independence, it becomes open season. No zip code is safe. No neighborhood is immune. The danger doesn’t come from outside—it’s sleeping in the bed, it’s knocking on the door, it’s the call that won’t stop coming.

We tell women to speak up. But when they do, we fail them. We tell them to leave. But when they do, the violence escalates. We tell them the system will protect them. But far too often, it doesn’t.

How many more Corinthian Shepherds will it take before we stop treating domestic violence as a “private matter”? Before we recognize it for what it truly is—an act of terrorism in our communities? An ongoing slaughter of women at the hands of partners, exes, and spouses who view their lives as possessions.

We need more than candlelight vigils and sad Facebook posts. We need bold laws, tougher enforcement, and a radical cultural shift. We need to teach boys and men that love does not look like domination. That control is not affection. That jealousy is not protection.

And we need to listen to women when they say they are afraid. We need to believe them, to support them, to help them escape—not when it’s too late, not when the police are drawing chalk lines around their bodies, but now.

Rest in power, Corinthian Shepherd. Your life mattered. Your story matters. May your tragic end wake us up from this collective sleepwalking. Because silence is complicity—and we’ve been silent far too long. And that’s my take. smithpren@aol.com

Howard—stand at the intersection of legacy and leadership.

Doug Williams changed the game—but more importantly, he’s changing lives. As he prepares to accept the President’s

Lifetime Achievement Award, we’re reminded that HBCUs don’t just produce greatness on the field—they raise up leaders who serve, give, and uplift others long after the spotlight fades.

had tried repeatedly to enact similar laws but always came up short due in part to concerns that police officers might use the phone ban as an excuse to perform traffic stops and vehicle searches. But lawmakers settled on a compromise that added a provision to prevent officers from conducting searches or making arrests based solely on a cell phone use violation.

he is looking forward to the dialogue from the community.

“We look forward to your participation and to the valuable insights you will bring to this collaborative effort.”

This comes as a result of people, especially incoming students, parking improperly near Dollar General and other high-traffic areas near the University.

He said for those with true disabilities, make sure you go to the DMV and pay the fee to get a disability placard to display in your car and don’t think you can just put a crutch in the car thinking you won’t get a ticket.

“Finally, this year we were able to pass a distracted driving bill,” Landry said before signing the bill Monday.

Violations of the new phone ban can fetch a fine of up to \$100 or up to \$250 if the offense occurs in a school or highway construction zone. However, those fines will not take effect until Jan. 1, 2026. Until that time, violators will receive a warning.

To RSVP and view event details, visit gram.edu/community. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of the President at presidentsoffice@gram.edu or (318) 274-6117.

“We can not pick and choose who to enforce this on. It’s across the board.” He said.

CivicReady Signups

The City of Grambling continues to urge its citizens to sign up for its emergency notification system that could potentially save lives. It’s free to sign up. Just go to www.cityofgrambling.org and click on CivicReady.

POTTER MOTIVATION

Shine in Every Classroom

By Rusty Potter

As students return to school, there’s one lesson I believe they need to carry into this new school year. It didn’t come from a textbook or a classroom, but from my mother, Mrs. Caroline Potter.

When I was a teenager, my mother would send us to the store with simple instructions: buy light bulbs - they had to be 100 watts. If we brought home anything less - a 60-watt or 75-watt bulb - we would turn around and head back to Smith’s Super Sack to exchange it. No excuses. No negotiations.

At the time, it felt frustrating. But now, I see it clearly: my mother wasn’t just talking about bulbs - she was teaching us a standard for life.

She was saying, “Shine as bright as you can. Don’t come halfway. Don’t settle for almost.” She was instilling in us the value of showing up at 100% - in school, in work, in how we treat others, and in how we see ourselves. We should have a reputation for giving 100%.

This school year, I want to pass that lesson on to every student walking into a classroom: Shine in every classroom.

That doesn’t mean you’ll get everything right the first time. It doesn’t mean you’ll never struggle or feel unsure. But it does mean this:



Rusty Potter

Show up and do your best. Stay focused. Stay curious. Ask questions. Try again. And don’t let the fear of failure dim your light.

Because the world doesn’t need dimmed-down, halfway-present students - it needs young people who are willing to grow with effort, character, and courage. Let your brilliance shine

bright this school year - walk in confidence, lead with kindness, and never dim your light to fit into a crowd.

For parents and teachers, this message is for you too: Set the expectation high. Be consistent. Believe in their abilities - even when they doubt it. Children often rise to the standard we set.

The world needs young people who know how to shine bright. Not just academically, but in character, effort, and resilience. The 100-watt mindset isn’t about perfection; it’s about showing up every day determined to give your all, even when it’s hard.

As this school year begins, may Mrs. Caroline Potter’s lesson live on. Teach your children - and remind yourself - that excellence is a decision. Partial effort is a missed opportunity. We must be known for excellent work.

You are not made to flicker.

You are not made to fade.

You are made to shine - consistently, boldly, and fully - just like a 100-watt bulb.

OP-ED: 60 Years Later, We’re Still Fighting for the Soul of Our Democracy

No weapon formed against our democracy shall prosper. We’ve crossed bridges before—we’ll cross this one too.

By State Representative Ron Reynolds

BLACKPRESSUSA - Sixty years ago, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was signed into law. It was a historic victory won by the blood, sweat, and sacrifice of Black Americans who refused to accept second-class citizenship. They faced dogs, batons, fire hoses, and fists—not because they broke the law, but because they dared to demand a voice.

They marched from Selma to Montgomery and were beaten on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. They bled in the streets of the Jim Crow South so we could vote without fear or suppression. That fight never ended.

Today, the focus has shifted. It’s no longer about Billy Clubs and German Shepherds. Instead, it involves gerrymandered maps, closed polling stations, purged voter rolls, attacks on mail-in voting, and false claims of voter fraud designed to undermine our democracy.

To those who say we’re disrupting the process, I say this: the process was already broken. We didn’t break it; we’re trying to fix it. That’s why I broke quorum in the Texas House, and I’d do it again. I didn’t come to play politics. I came to do what Congressman John Lewis taught us—to get into good trouble, necessary trouble, in the name of justice.

Breaking quorum wasn’t a stunt. It was a stand.



Ron Reynolds, Texas State Representative

When policies silence voters, target communities of color, and rig the system for partisan gain, you don’t just sit quietly. You walk out. You speak up. You fight back.

I thought about my grandparents, who grew up in the segregated South. I thought about my mother, who cast her first ballot with pride because someone had marched for that right. I thought about my children and the world they’ll inherit if we don’t act now.

I did it for the grandmother who’s never missed an election and now doesn’t know where her polling place is. For the young man registering voters on a college campus who’s being told his voice doesn’t count. I did it for neighborhoods split apart to dilute their power.

As Dr. King said, an injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. That injustice is here. It’s in our special session agendas designed for anti-voter legislation. In attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and in maps that slice

through Black and Brown communities to weaken our voices.

I’m proud to stand in the legacy of Fannie Lou Hamer, who was sick and tired of being sick and tired; of Bob Moses, who built a grassroots movement to register voters; and of Diane Nash, Amelia Boynton, James Bevel, and everyday people who risked everything for the right to vote.

I stand beside a new generation of leaders and everyday Texans who are saying enough is enough. I believe in the power of the people, in a multiracial democracy where every voice counts, and history will remember who stood on the front lines when our democracy was under siege.

The Voting Rights Act was a beginning, not an end. Sixty years later, we are still called to be foot soldiers for freedom. I will not stop fighting, speaking, or marching until every Texan has full access to the ballot promised in 1965.

My faith is strong. No weapon formed against me shall prosper. This is our moment. This is our bridge. And we will cross it together.

Representative Ron Reynolds is the State Representative for House District 27 in Texas. Ron is currently serving his seventh term in the Texas House. He is the first African American State Representative in Fort Bend County since Reconstruction.

Grambling Legend From Page 1

Williams receiving this award at Howard is a full-circle moment. A moment where two institutions—Grambling and

Louisiana From Page 1

The law which took effect on Aug. 1 and is part of the Louisiana Legislature’s effort to tackle the high cost of auto insurance in the state. Studies have shown that cell phone use while driving significantly increases the risk of an accident, which could drive up insurance rates.

Before this year’s legislative session, lawmakers

GSU From Page 1

Refreshments will be available during each session. Guests may join in person or virtually via Zoom.

President Lemelle said

City From Page 1

Police Chief Warns of “Zero-Tolerance” for Improper Parking

Police Chief Tommy Clark said he has implemented a zero-tolerance policy for improper parking in fire zones or handicap spaces without proper credentials (e.g., a disabled placard) and you will be ticketed if caught.

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COMMUNITY

Grambling Chamber Gives Businesses Recognition

By Joice M. Dunn

The bad weather didn't hinder a number of businesses from being honored Thursday, July 31 at the Grambling City Hall by the Greater Grambling Chamber of Commerce. Jeffery Sims, president of the Chamber, thanked companies for joining and welcomed them along with potential members to the Chamber.

Gregory "Big Coach" Williams extended greetings to those present. He explained that any area needs a strong Chamber as he thanked the former president, Barbara McIntyre, for a job well done and Sims for accepting the mantle and for bringing new energy to the city.

Mark Hunter, Chairman of Planning and Zoning and a member of the Chamber, represented Mayor Alvin Bradley. "The City of Grambling is working on a number of plans and we are proud to have a Chamber that is working with us. The community will see some



Jeffrey Sims - Chamber President

changes such as growth and beautification taking place in the future," said Hunter.

Reaching out to new as well as members of the chamber was Augustine Moore, serving as membership chair as well as secretary.

"Grambling is only

great as its people, so we need you as individuals and businesses to join us, help and support us. Our job is to promote and support your business by holding ribbon cuttings, open houses or whatever your business aims for, the Chamber is here to assist you. There will



Dr. Suzanne Mayo, Chamber Member

be promotions offered on the Chamber's website, Instagram and Facebook," explained Moore.

The Chamber plans to partner with the Grambling Connection Newspaper as well as The Ruston Daily Leader to feature a "Business of the Month" article, said Moore.

"We plan to do whatever we can to promote your business because if you do well, Grambling will do well, because teamwork, makes the dream work," Moore said.

"I set back and watched for the past year and a half because I didn't want to rush into anything

new. As I stepped into the president's shoes, I prayed as I took my steps, even with this event," according to Sims.

Sims spoke of his vision as God told him to work his plan. "God said to me, you have the vision, now work the plan. Get the people behind you to back and support the plan. I need everyone as chamber members to buy into the vision to make the City of Grambling the best it can be," said Sims.

The new president said, the Chamber is now a nonprofit, a goal that had been set by the former president. If nothing else is accomplished under his leadership, Sims wants the chamber to have a place to call home.

Several representatives of various companies shared their plans and goals for the future. The Chamber members had applications available for any company to sign up as members.

Dr. Suzanne Mynette Mayo, Chamber member, served as coordinator and food was provided by Terrance Giles.

Announcements

Lincoln Parish NAACP to hold meeting Sundays

The Lincoln Parish NAACP Branch Unit #6064 will have its monthly meeting every third Sunday at 6 p.m. in the month. The next meeting will be held on Sunday, August 17, at the Lincoln United Community Coalition building at 407 North Hazel Street, Ruston, La.

All interested people (not just members) are encouraged to attend. Anyone who is interested in becoming a member or wants more information on memberships may contact President W D Walker at 318-436-6139.

Next Chat with the Ruston Chief coming soon

The next Chats with the Chief will be set for Monday, Aug. 18, 6 p.m. at The Bridge Community Church, located at 2301 North Trenton Street.

The Chats with the Ruston Chief program are designed to develop greater understanding between the public and the Ruston Police Department.

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 18. For additional information please contact Collins at 832- 891-7488 or WWW.REAL-LYGREATSITE.COM.

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 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 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 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.




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COMMUNITY

Business In Spotlight: Da Soulfood Express

By Lena W. Claybon

I’ve never seen a business fill a parking lot on Day 1 and from that day on, people never stop coming! Such is the case with the little restaurant on College Ave that packs a big wallop, Da Soulfood Express!

In the few months they’ve been around, it’s been a non-stop, day in and day out, stream of customers and it doesn’t look like it’s going to slow down anytime soon.

Some say it’s the downhome southern charm and the friendly faces that makes them keep coming back, but most say, it’s the delicious homemade cuisine that reminds them of home that keeps them coming through the door. Whichever reason one has, one thing’s for sure, Miss Michael Foster and her staff have found the winning formula to put smiles on their patrons’ faces and keep them coming back for more!

The Grambling Connection caught up with Miss Michael (as she’s fondly called) recently to find out a little about her and her “secret sauce”, so to speak, for success:

GC: So, tell us a little bit about your background. Where are you originally from?

Michael: I’m from Ruston, Louisiana.

GC: Oh, so you’re right from the region. Did you have a restaurant before in Ruston?

Michael: No, ma’am, I didn’t.

GC: Is this your first restaurant?

Michael: This is my first restaurant... I mean, my family has always had



Michael Foster and her staff

restaurants, and then I was working at the Grambling Junction for like 5 or 6 years (working in the kitchen there).

GC: Oh, so you were the one in the back cooking those delicious chicken wings they sold out front?

Michael: Mm-hmm, yes, ma’am.

GC: And after you left there, you just decided to open your own spot?

Michael: After they said they couldn’t afford to pay me any longer, I was first looking around [for another job] but then I decided to just go for it myself. I said, if I’m going to work that hard for somebody, I might as well work that hard for myself.

GC: I hear you!

Michael: And it is hard work, but it’s enjoyable because it’s for myself.

GC: I understand. So, what made

you do a soul food restaurant as opposed to something simple like... just wings or something like that?

Michael: Cause that’s what we needed here. I’ve seen a lot of people in this area go all the way out somewhere just to get soul food. They’ll go all the way to Choudrant. They’ll go all the way to Arcadia. Even I was looking for one.

GC: Me too!

Michael: And people would come to the Junction and when I was out front, they’d say, “It’d be good if we had some greens to go with this chicken or some beans. So, I just added all that. So, really, the community did this.

GC: Nothing like community feedback.

Michael: Yeah, they just gave me little pointers and I added it together.

GC: Well, you must be doing something right, because this parking lot is full all the time!

Michael: It’s because of y’all. I swear to God. I don’t even feel like it’s my restaurant. It’s the community’s restaurant.

GC: So, tell the readers (who don’t already know) what foods are on the menu.

Michael: Everyday, it’s a different menu. We do fish, baked chicken, barbe-que, greens, cabbage, corn bread, mashed potatoes... you name it. And we serve breakfast every morning.

GC: I’m getting hungry just listening! (laughs) Do you also cater?

Michael: We haven’t gotten a lot of calls for that but, sure, we can, as long as we have enough notice in advance.

GC: I already know the answer to this but, from your perspective, how has the reception been from the community?

Michael: It’s been overwhelming! I mean... it’s been just... amazing!

GC: It’s like people were just waiting for this!

Michael: I agree.

GC: One last question... so, since you’re from Ruston, what made you decide to open your restaurant in Grambling and not Ruston?

Michael: I do everything in Grambling. This is my family. I live in Ruston, but my family is here. And when I say my family, I’m talking about the community – you know... I feel this is my home. I love the people, the culture... I feel God put me right where I needed to be.

The Soulfood Express is located at 302 College Ave in Grambling.

Pinkie C. Wilkerson Life Development Foundation Awards Scholarships

For over two decades, the Pinkie C. Wilkerson Life Development Foundation has proudly awarded scholarships to outstanding high school graduates enrolling at Grambling State University. This year, five named scholarships are to be presented to exceptional students within the Foundation’s service area, recognizing both academic excellence and commitment to community service.

The 2025 scholarship recipients are:

Charity Willis, Simsboro High School – Rev. Clifton E. Lewis Scholarship

Rev. Clifton Lewis, a graduate of Grambling State University, was a Pastor and Educator who served in Lincoln, Union, Claiborne, and Jackson parishes including serving as serving as Principal of Homer High School.

Omar Bell, Ringgold High School – Jo Ann Roux Scholarship

Jo Ann Roux was a distinguished Educator who dedicated decades of service in both Louisiana and



Ohio. She broke racial barriers as the first black teacher at Brown Elementary in Springhill, LA

Jayla Banks, Homer High School – Gatha Jean Heard-Smith Scholarship

Gatha Jean Heard-Smith, a graduate of Grambling State University, was a Therapist, Writer, and Community Organizer; holding membership in the NEA, LRTA, and NAACP. She served as the musician for over 60 years.

Jacobee Ziegler, Choudrant High School – Nelda & Walter Baisy Scholarship

Walter & Nelda Baisy, both graduates of Grambling State University, have been married for over 50 years. They

are both active members of the Grambling community known for their philanthropic giving and unwavering support various community service endeavors. They are active members of the New Rocky Vally Baptist Church, Grambling Joy Fund, and Grambling Memorial Garden. Nelda is a Golden Life member of Delta Sigma theta Sorority, Inc and serves as the Treasurer for the Pinkie C. Wilkerson Life Development Foundation.

Omarian Rushing, Simsboro High School – Annie Brown Scholarship

Annie Brown was a Community Leader, Activist, and Educator who served who served in numerous leadership positions including Humani-

tarian Enterprise of Lincoln Parish, Lincoln Parish NAACP, and Lincoln Parish Retired Educators. These named scholarships are made possible through generous partnerships with community members who wish to

honor the legacies of loved ones, celebrate community leaders, or support the academic pursuits of local youth.

The annual scholarship program continues the impactful legacy of the late Representative Pinkie

Carolyn Wilkerson, who faithfully served Louisiana’s 11th District until her death in August 2000. Through these awards, the Foundation remains steadfast in its mission to support and invest in the next generation of leaders.



A WELCOME MESSAGE
FROM THE MAYOR, COUNCILMEMBERS, AND
CITIZENS OF GRAMBLING
TO
THE AWESOME STUDENTS OF
GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY
&
LINCOLN PREPRATORY SCHOOL

As you enter this academic year, we encourage you to take charge of your future! Engage in your studies, participate in school activities, and strive for excellence. Your journey to success starts now!

Additionally, we share an inspirational quote from Dr. Nanthalia McJamerson, drawn from her book *Reconstructing Lives: Taking the Mystery out of Success*:

“Success is not a mystery—it’s a series of choices, actions, and reflections that shape who you become.”

Dr. McJamerson, a celebrated author and retired professor from Grambling State University, has dedicated her career to empowering students and educators through literacy, self-awareness, and achievement. Her work emphasizes that success is attainable through intentional growth and resilience.

The Mayor, Councilmembers, and the great Citizens of our city encourage our students to remember that every challenge is an opportunity to grow. Embrace each moment with courage and determination and let your resilience pave the way to your success.

We pray for an enjoyable and productive year for all Administrators, Faculty, Staff, and Students.



PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

Grand Opening Ceremony

Grambling Center
THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 2025 | 10:00 A.M.
120 LEGENDS AVE., SUITE 104
GRAMBLING, LA 71245





CHURCH NEWS

Let's Pray for the students this year

By Donald Lee

As the kiddos prepare for a new school year, I'd like to share biblically based wisdom you can use to aid your children in having an amazing time.

And we're living in an age when so much mass destruction has become common place, such as young people rebelling against authority in the schools, fights amongst students on a regular basis (many of which have their roots in social media), and "active shooters" on campuses throughout the country.

Because all of these things are so prevalent nowadays, we've got to remember that most of these types of instances are end results of activities that are going on simultaneously in the spirit realm.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, reads Ephesians 6:12 of the Bible. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand, the scripture adds.

Put another way, as believers, we are of the understanding that much of what we see in this visible realm of existence, the world that we can perceive with our natural senses, is influenced by what's going on in the spirit world, which is the sphere in which the forces of good and evil are constantly at war with each other.

What are they fighting over in that realm of existence that can't be detected by man's five senses?



Donald Lee

Influence. There's constant warfare going on in which God's angels are dispatched --- especially in response to prayer --- to protect people from destruction and evil deeds attempted to be done to them by other people who may be influenced by fallen angels, also referred to as demons.

Quite often, people are mean and hateful toward other people because they --- a lot of times --- can't discern that fallen angels speak to them in the form of wicked thoughts and ideas, especially when they are angry with someone else.

What does it look like when this happens, you may ask? In the schools, those dark forces rear their

ugly heads in the form of bullying. One student or a group of students may harass another student.

Oftentimes, they may not realize that the idea does verbally or physically harm someone else wasn't something that they thought up on their own, but rather something subtly suggested to them by a demon or fallen angel.

When parents cover their children spiritually through prayer, heavenly angels are dispatched around those children to fight off the unclean spirits harassing their children as they use other kids as vessels, or channels, through which evil deeds could occur.

When we pray to God with the understanding that prayer changes things and that it wards off evil intentions, the Lord God sends His angels to thwart mass shootings before a demon-influenced individual could make it to a campus to do harm to anyone.

One way that can happen, for example: A person with evil intent can tell someone he trusts that he plans to go and shoot up a school. That "friend" then calls the police, who then intercepts the would-be shooter before he could carry out his plan.

Pray without ceasing, 1st Thessalonians 5:17 says: When we pray, especially having a consistent prayer life, we invoke the supernatural covering of God to protect us and our families. So, let's all keep our children lifted up before the Lord in prayer for safety daily.

Donald Lee is a GSU alumnus, and a former editor-in-chief of The Gramblinite, campus paper. He is founder of Kingdom Living Christian Center in Dallas.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mt. Olive Mission to hold monthly meeting

The Mt. Olive Baptist Church Mission Department will hold its meeting Saturday, August 16, 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.

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 Talullah, 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.

New Prosperity Church of Clay to hold services

The New Prosperity Baptist Church of Clay, Louisiana will hold homecoming service and revival services starting Sunday, August 17 at 2:30 p.m. Rev. Charles Thompson is the pastor of the church.

The revival services will begin Monday - Thursday, August 18-21, at 7 p.m. nightly. Everyone is invited to come out and worship.

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. 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., Grambling.

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

Area Church Directory

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

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

BAPTIST

Alabama, 16061 Hwy. 151, Arcadia
Barnett Springs, 1601 S. Barnett Springs Rd., Ruston
China Grove Missionary, 406 Vernon St., Ruston
Christ Temple 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 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 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
Douglass 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

Get Grounded, Get Free: Healing the Root Chakra

By Charming Davis

Naturally Charming Universe Holistic Wellness Center Let’s begin where all healing starts—at the root. Because if your foundation is shaky, everything above it will wobble too. Your root chakra, located at the base of your spine, is your energy center for safety, stability, and survival. It governs how grounded you feel in your body, in your home, in your life, and even in your money.

When your root chakra is strong and open, you feel safe, focused, and supported by life. But when it’s blocked or wounded—often from childhood trauma, generational fear, or never feeling truly secure—it can leave you constantly on edge, anxious, stuck, or in survival mode.

What It Feels Like When Your Root Chakra Is Blocked

- You might feel:
- Fearful about the future

- Unsafe in your body or home
- Constantly worried about money or survival
- Disconnected from your physical self
- Like you’re hustling non-stop but never feeling stable
- Chronically tired, scattered, or unmotivated

These are signs that the energy at the root is asking for your attention. You don’t need to be in survival mode forever. You deserve to feel rooted, held, and whole.

Why the Root Chakra Matters

In the African-American community, so many of us grew up in homes where we didn’t always feel safe. Whether it was emotional instability, financial stress, or environments that forced us to be “strong” way too young—many of us learned to adapt instead of feel secure. But true healing means getting to the root of it all. And that starts by giving yourself what you never got: grounded safety, stillness, and structure.



Charming Davis

A balanced root chakra helps you:

- Feel grounded and present
- Trust yourself and life more deeply
- Release anxiety and fear
- Build strong foundations—financially, emotionally, spiritually
- Show up with consistency, confidence, and calm

How to Heal and Strengthen Your Root Chakra

- Walk barefoot in the grass or soil—connect with the Earth
- Eat grounding foods like root vegetables, whole grains, and beans
- Use herbs like ashwagandha, nettle, dandelion root, and cinnamon
- Practice breathwork and stillness—come back to your body
- Wear or meditate with red crystals like garnet or red jasper
- Speak affirmations like “I am safe. I am grounded. I am supported.”
- Rest—because deep rest tells the nervous system it’s okay now

At Naturally Charming Universe Holistic Wellness Center, I offer grounding teas, detox blends, root chakra oil blends, healing sessions, and spiritual work designed to stabilize your energy from the ground up. You can also book a phone consultation with

me if you’re not sure where to start. I’ll help you identify what’s out of balance and guide you toward peace and stability.

It’s Time to Break the Cycle

You don’t have to carry generational fear. You don’t have to feel like the ground beneath you is always shifting. You are allowed to feel safe now. To feel rooted. To feel like your life has a strong, unshakeable foundation. That’s where everything else grows from.

Let’s work together to ground your spirit, calm your mind, and restore your strength—one root at a time.

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.

Back to School: Strategies to Promote Children’s Mental Health

by Jeannetta Stephens-Jones

School bells have begun to toll indicating, “BACK TO SCHOOL”. This includes beginners, high school and college. This time of the year is packed with stress, anxiety and yes, depression.

- Stress- a state of mental or emotional strain resulting from adverse demanding circumstances.
- Anxiety- a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.
- Depression –feeling of severe despondency and dejection.

Going back to school can be tough and can have many parents juggling many students across different age groups. These

different age groups come with various concerns and pressures. Their worries can be centered on fitting in, academics and their ability to dress to impress. However, it is important to create a foundation for their social, emotional, mental, and physical wellness.

Attending school for the first time or returning to school brings about a change. According to Jessica Kyle, a Licensed Professional Counselor, change can be hard for school aged children as their brains are still developing. Kyle also indicates that it may be beneficial to children to have predictable schedules to help reduce uncertainty and provide them with a sense of security.

Research suggests the following are strategies that can be used by parents to promote mental



Jeannetta Stephens-Jones

health:

- Encourage open communication- create a safe environment for children to feel comfortable expressing their feelings and concerns.
- Establish consistent routines- create a balanced routine that includes adequate sleep, healthy meals, physical activity and relaxation.

- Promote healthy habits – encourage healthy habits that support mental well-being.
- Teach coping skills-teach children effective coping skills, i.e. deep breathing exercises and mindfulness techniques to manage stress.
- Build positive relationships – encourage children to build positive relationships with peers and adults. Help your child develop strong friendships and connections with supportive individuals.
- Be mindful of academic pressure – academic success is very important. It is equally important to strike a balance and avoid putting too much pressure on your child to excel academically. Encourage them to do their best and emphasize the importance of their over-

- all well-being.
- Model healthy behavior- Children often follow examples set by parents. Parents should be mindful of their own mental health and how you cope with stress. Model healthy behaviors such as problem solving, resilience and self-care. Employing these strategies can help make the year meaningful and memorable, no matter the age.

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being.

Mental health affects how students learn, connect with others and cope with challenges. The beginning of a new school year is a big adjustment and can bring on emotional challenges for children of all ages. Children will require understand-

ing as well as support from parents and teachers in order to be successful with managing stress and the emotional exhaustion that may be felt throughout the school year.

Statistics report that one in 10 children live with a serious mental or emotional disorder. Let’s help make this school year the best ever.

Wishing all of our students a very successful 2025-26 school year!

Resources:
www.nami.org
www.mayoclinic.org
www.webmd.org
www.nimh.org
Jeannetta Stephens-Jones, Ed.D., retired educational diagnostician/ speech pathologist and president of NAMI Ruston Board of Directors. Contact her jjones79_aka@yahoo.com.

THE GRAMBLING ★ CONNECTION

The Grambling Connection is looking for Freelance Writers!

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ARTS & CULTURE

BET Gutted, DEI Killed, Media Bought—Trump’s Playbook in Action

From purging diversity programs to steamrolling media independence, Trump has unleashed a blitzkrieg of white nationalist policymaking under the guise of federal power.

By Stacy M. Brown, Senior National Correspondent

BLACKPRESSUSA - Donald Trump’s first eight months back in the White House have erased any illusion of restraint. He is not just following the Project 2025 playbook — the authoritarian blueprint he once claimed to know nothing about — he’s executing it with surgical precision. From purging diversity programs to steamrolling media independence, Trump has unleashed a blitzkrieg of white nationalist policymaking under the guise of federal power. And now, with the blessing of federal regulators, he has the media — including Black-owned and Black-centered platforms — under his heel. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently approved the \$8 billion acquisition of Paramount Global — parent company of CBS and BET — by Skydance Media. The merger was greenlit just days after Paramount paid a \$16 million settlement to Trump, resolving a lawsuit over a “60 Minutes” interview with then-candidate Kamala Harris. Critics say the timing was no coincidence.

During a PBS interview, journalist Dylan Byers said plainly: “It certainly seems that way. All available evidence suggests that this was a payoff dressed up as a settlement.” The fear, said Byers, is that this is the



new cost of doing business in Trump’s America. “If you need any deal to get done, any merger, any acquisition, you might be forced to cough up — the number seems to be — \$16 million to the Trump Presidential Library.” Even more chilling is what the deal required: the gutting of DEI initiatives, the installation of a political ombudsman to monitor “bias,” and an additional \$20 million in PSAs dedicated to causes “near and dear to the president’s heart.” One lone FCC commissioner voted against the deal, citing “overreach by the FCC and capitulation by Paramount.” Brendan Carr, FCC Chairman, was blunt in his public remarks: “President Trump is fundamentally reshaping the media landscape.” He applauded Trump’s direct attacks on legacy media giants like ABC, NBC, and CBS, now effectively under his influence. That influence extends to

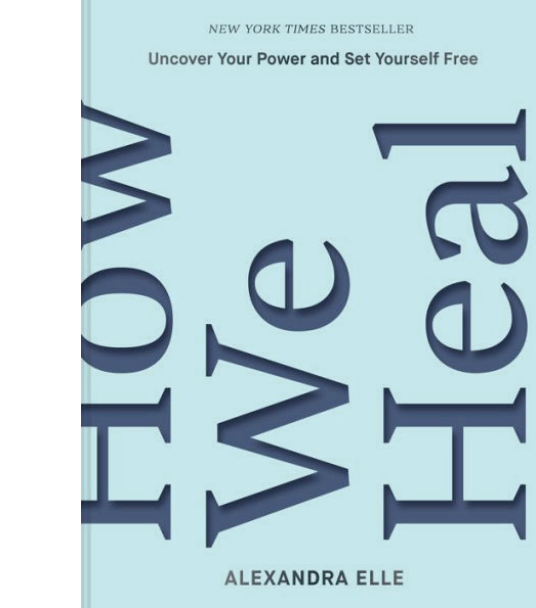
content and culture. BET — a pillar of Black music, film, and storytelling — has abruptly suspended both the BET Hip Hop Awards and the Soul Train Awards indefinitely. It’s a blow many in the Black community see as part of a larger strategy: silencing Black voices while making media whiter, safer, and Trump-approved. A viral video by TikTok user @TalkUrShxxtNene has ignited online conversations by connecting the dots that mainstream outlets have tiptoed around. “So, BET has suspended BET Hip Hop and the Soul Train Awards indefinitely,” the video begins. “Now I want everyone to pay attention to this s**t.” The post breaks down the timeline and details of the Paramount-Skydance merger, pointing out the suspicious coincidence of Stephen Colbert’s show being canceled, CBS executives changing their messaging, and the networks now

reportedly having a “CC monitor for Trump.” “This is about Trump making the guillotine whiter,” she says in the video. “Only white people should be seen. And they’re going to dismantle BET whether we realize it or not.” “Little by little, they’re going to take BET away from us,” she warns.

Her video points to a larger agenda: the erasure of Black visibility in media, the collapse of Black cultural programming, and the sanitization of entertainment to reflect Trump’s white nationalist vision. “They’re eroding everyone else and leaving the white people there to sit,” she says. “Blue eyes and blonde hair are not the architects of beauty. That’s racism. That’s eugenics. And they’re going to keep throwing that in the entertainment space because everything is there. The media controls everything. And right now, Trump has it under his boot.”

Under Skydance’s takeover — and with Trump’s hand guiding every major federal agency — CBS, BET, and other Paramount properties are being forced to undergo “comprehensive reviews” to ensure “viewpoint diversity.” Translated: no more liberal, inclusive, or racially conscious content that could offend MAGA sensibilities. During the same PBS segment, anchor Geoff Bennett asked Byers, “Is this sort of the new template for future media deals — this sort of new era of political appeasement?” “Yes,” Byers answered. “As long as everyone plays ball — pay the settlement, dismantle DEI, install a political censor — then your deal goes through. This is the way deals get done, at least so long as Trump is in office.”

Black voices, Black spaces, and Black storytelling are being sacrificed in these deals. Trump’s administration has already gutted DEI efforts in federal agencies, banned references to systemic racism, and pushed new education guidelines that eliminate or sanitize discussions of slavery and civil rights. This isn’t just about Trump controlling the message. It’s about erasing communities and histories he sees as expendable. And doing so by leveraging the federal government, corporate media, and billions of dollars in hush-money settlements. The media — once a check on presidential power — is now a pawn in his political empire. As @TalkUrShxxtNene concluded in her viral takedown, “Don’t be stupid. Everyone likes to see the glass half-full instead of that b**ch half-empty. This is what erasure looks like.”



Book Review: How We Heal

In *How We Heal*, best-selling author Alexandra Elle offers a life-changing invitation to heal yourself and reclaim your peace. In these pages, readers will discover essential techniques for self-healing, including journaling rituals to cultivate innate strength, accessible tools for processing difficult emotions, and restorative meditations

to ease the mind. Alex Elle elegantly weaves together themes like self-healing, mindfulness, inner child work, and boundary setting and presents the reader with easy-to-follow practices that have changed her life and the lives of the thousands of people she has taught. Her 4-part framework for healing will appeal to

anyone who wants a clear process, while the compelling personal stories leave the reader feeling connected and ready to begin again. Complementing the practices are powerful insights from Alex Elle’s own journey of self-discovery using writing to heal, plus remarkable stories of healing from a range of luminary voices, including Nedra Tawwab,

Morgan Harper Nichols, Dr. Thema Bryant, Barb Schmidt, and many more. Brimming with encouragement and delivered with Alex Elle’s signature warmth and candor, *How We Heal* is a must-have companion for anyone that wants to unlock their inner wisdom and confidence to heal on their own.

Ice Cube’s Sci-Fi Movie Panned by Critics

NATIONWIDE — Ice Cube’s new sci-fi movie *War of the Worlds* is now streaming on Amazon Prime, but it quickly faced harsh criticism. Critics and viewers slammed the film for bad pacing, awkward performances, and an overused screenlife style. Despite its streaming popularity, the movie is widely seen as a major disappointment.

The film, released on July 30, 2025, is a modern take on H.G. Wells’ classic story. Ice Cube stars as Will Radford, a Department of Homeland Security officer who uncovers an alien

invasion while tracking a hacker, who turns out to be his son. The movie tries to tell the story through screens and digital devices, aiming for a fresh feel.

However, the new “screenlife” style, showing everything on phones and computers, didn’t click with audiences. Many found it awkward and boring, saying it made the story hard to follow. According to *EuroWeb*, critics also pointed out that Ice Cube’s acting was stiff and monotone, especially since most scenes showed him sitting at a desk.

One line from Ice

Cube, “Take your intergalactic asses back home!”, became an internet joke for being unintentionally funny rather than scary. Viewers compared watching the movie to watching someone scroll through videos, and not what you want from a sci-fi thriller.

Despite its poor reviews, *War of the Worlds* did get a lot of streams at first. However, the film is now mostly remembered for its failures, especially the mismatch between Ice Cube and his tech-heavy role. Fans and critics alike are left wondering if this remake was a good idea.

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SPORTS

Lincoln Prep kicks off season

By Joice M. Dunn

The Lincoln Preparatory High School football program will start the season with a new coach at the helm. Chaunce Davison is a dedicated football coach with deep roots in the Grambling community.

Davison attended Grambling High School from 1993 and graduating in 1997. During those years he played football under Greg “Big Coach” Williams. He continued his education at Grambling State University, earning both a bachelor’s in Kinesiology in 2006 and a Master’s in Sport Management.

Before returning to his alma mater, Davison’s coaching career began at Union Christian Academy, with subsequent stops at General Trass and Tio-ga. Since 2016, he has coached various positions and served as the defensive coordinator for three years at Lincoln Preparatory High School.

Beyond his career, Coach Davison is a devoted father and grandfather who credits his faith in God and Jesus Christ as the foundation of his life.

Practice for the Lincoln Prep Panthers started Monday, Aug.11 with about 35 players.

“We might pick up a few more players as the school year gets fully under way. I possess a highly talented staff that includes Dominique Hill, Billy Norman,



C. Davison

Vyron Brown, Charles Scott, Tavien Turner, and Qua Brantley,” explained Davison.

The staff roster will present a diverse experience, from former head coaches and NFL players to stand-out college and high school athletes.

“The program is proud of the staff assembled and recognizes the immense blessing it is to have these men shaping our future players,” Davison proudly said.

JeQualyn Brantley was a two sports athlete at Grambling High School from 2008-2011 making all district two years in a row playing football making a deep 3rd round run in the playoffs!

Taviauhn Turner graduated from Lincoln Prep High School, where he competed in both football and baseball. Football has always been his passion. He was redshirted at Lane College to receive the opportunity to grow into his role, virtually becoming a

2025 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

SEP 5 VS O'ARBONNE WOODS	SEP 11 AT MAGNOLIA SOE	SEP 19 VS BEEKMAN	SEP 26 VS JONESBORO-HODGE	OCT 03 VS HAYNESVILLE	OCT 10 AT RINGGOLD
OCT 17 AT GLENBROOK	OCT 24 AT CEDAR CREEK	 MONROE · RUSTON · GRAMBLING 318.388.3000		 OCT 31 VS PLAIN DEALING HOMECOMING	NOV 7 AT ARCADIA

senior leader on the team in 2022. He was honored to be named to the SIAC All-Conference Second Team for offense.

Charles Scott is a graduate of Jonesboro-Hodge High School, where he was a two-time First Team All-State selection, the 2006 Gatorade Player of the Year, and Mr. Football Louisiana. His football journey continued at Louisiana State University, where he contributed to the 2007 SEC Championship and the 2007 National Championship, and

in 2008 he earned recognition as a First Team All-SEC Running Back. In 2010, Scott was selected in the NFL Draft and went on to have a brief professional career with the Philadelphia Eagles, Arizona Cardinals, and New York Giants. He has 5 years of high school football coaching experience previously serving as Strength and Conditioning Coordinator and Offensive Coordinator for Cedar Creek and Jonesboro Hodge.

Dominique Hill graduated from Mansfield High School in 2014. From 2014 to 2017, he made history as the first early enrollee in McNeese State University football history and went on to have a standout career. I was a three-time All-Conference selection, a 2017 All-American, and the 2017 Defensive MVP, earning seven Southland Conference Defensive Player of the Week honors while helping the Cowboys win the 2015 conference championship. Recognized

for both leadership and character, named team and defensive captain, received the Good Sportsmanship Award and earned a place on the Dean's List. He has six years of experience coaching football at the high school level, including roles as wide receivers coach, defensive backs coach, and offensive coordinator.

Billy Norman graduated from Grambling high School in 1988. He was All District Offensive Line-man and Defensive Line-man; a 1988 Louisiana All Star selection for the West. Norman enrolled at Grambling State University where he was privileged to be a part of a S.W.A.C. championship ('89); Heritage Bowl championship ('92) and National championship ('92). He began his coaching journey in 1994 as a Jr. High school Coach offensive Coordinator and promoted to the High school O-line and strong safety/outside linebackers. He was also

Head Coach of the Minden Rough Riders where for a 5 year span the team was top 5 in the nation.

Otis Jones from Shreveport by way of Grambling, Louisiana, graduated from Captain Shreve High School in 1995. He attended Grambling State University from 95-2000 with a bachelor's degree in Leisure Studies with a concentration in Therapeutic Recreation. Before working at GSU, Jones worked with the Denver Broncos as a student trainer via the PFAST minority scholarship. He worked at Grambling State University as an Athletic Trainer for 8 years with various sports. He worked as an Athletic Trainer at Green Clinic for Grambling High and Bienville Parish for 8 years. He has worked at Lincoln Prep for three years as a Teacher and Athletic Trainer.

Robert Butler serves as Strength and Conditioning Coach. He is a true motivator in changing the students' bodies and mindset.



Lincoln Preparatory High School football players get in some practice time.

NFC East is the only division with four Black starting quarterbacks

BlackPressUSA

The National Football League's NFC Eastern Division will be the first division that fields four Black or African-American starting quarterbacks this season. The anticipated starting quarterbacks are Jayden Daniels, Jalen Hurts, Dak Prescott, and Russell Wilson, respectively, for the Washington Commanders, Philadelphia Eagles, Dallas Cowboys, and the New York Giants.

Hurts will return to Philadelphia for his sixth season after the Eagles defeated the Kansas City Chiefs at Super Bowl LIX in New Orleans. In the 2024 season, Hurts completed 68.9% of his passes, threw for 2,903 yards, and tallied 32 combined touchdowns (18 passing, 14 rushing).

Daniels cements the Commanders

Jayden Daniels returns to Washington carrying huge expectations after leading his team to an NFC Championship game appearance last season. His growth during his rookie year took the league by storm. In 2024, Daniels threw for 3,568 yards and 25 touchdowns. He also added 891 rushing yards and six touchdowns, culminating in Offensive Rookie of the Year Honors.

Dak Prescott is always under pressure... 2025 is no different

The Dallas Cowboys



The NFC East's four Black starting quarterbacks.

will remain relevant as long as Jerry Jones is the owner, general manager, and the lead promoter. With that, the spotlight shines brightest while Prescott wears the star on his helmet. He is also no stranger to criticism. When Prescott got engaged last season, fans took to social media to lament the fact that the engagement ring may be the only 'ring' he gets his hands on during his playing career. Heavy is the head that wears the crown. In Prescott's case, he's entering the first year of a \$240 million extension, which will see him earn more than \$60 million per season. The Cowboys are in win-now mode. But could they be hamstrung by Prescott's contract?

Can Russell Wilson be a bridge for the Giants?

Russell Wilson signed a one-year contract with the New York Giants in the offseason to bring stability to the quarterback room. Jameis Winston was also signed to be the backup. Head Coach

Brian Daboll said during Monday's press conference that Wilson has had a positive impact on Giants star receiver Malik Nabers.

Even though the Giants drafted Jaxson Dart in the first round of the 2025 NFL Draft, the Giants are expected to feature Wilson (and possibly Winston) this year as Dart sits. While Wilson isn't as elusive as he used to be, it is up to the Giants' offensive line to give the 36-year-old quarterback time. Additionally, the running game must be effective for Wilson to execute play action passes, something he excels at.

Last year, there were sixteen Black starting quarterbacks in the NFL. Joining Daniels, Hurts, Prescott, and Wilson were Justin Fields, Lamar Jackson, Jordan Love, Patrick Mahomes II, Kyler Murray, Michael Penix Jr., Anthony Richardson, Geno Smith, CJ Stroud, Cam Ward, Deshaun Watson, Caleb Williams, and Bryce Young.

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	9.6
	9.13
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