



COMMUNITY
The Grambling Connection
Receives Grant Award from
Ruston-Lincoln Chamber of
Commerce
| 3



ARTS & CULTURE
NAACP & BET
Announce Date of
“57th NAACP Image
Awards”
| 7

THE GRAMBLING★CONNECTION

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OPINION



POTTER MOTIVATION

Finish Strong: Catching Your Second Wind in the Final Stretch of 2025

By Rusty Potter

Here we are - the last month of 2025. For some, this year has flown by. For others, it has felt like a marathon with hills you didn't see coming. But no matter how the year has treated you, December gives us all one final chance: a chance to finish strong. Not perfect - just strong.

Anyone who has ever run a race knows something about the "second wind." It's that burst of energy that shows up right when your body is saying, "I'm done." Your legs are heavy, your breathing is uneven, your mind is questioning everything - but suddenly,

something shifts. Strength returns. Focus sharpens. Hopes rise. You move forward with a renewed determination that surprises even you.

Life works the same way.

The truth is, many of us started 2025 with big dreams and bold plans. Maybe you mapped out new goals, launched a project, committed to healthier habits, or promised yourself that this year would look different. But along the way, life happened. Detours came. Storms rolled in. Some things took longer than expected. Some things hurt more than expected. And some things simply didn't go at all the way you planned.

But December says some-



Rusty Potter

thing powerful: "Don't quit. Your second wind is waiting."

If you're a student, this applies to you as well. Final exams are here, and you want to do well. You've already started preparing... right? Even if you feel tired

or overwhelmed, that second wind can help you push through those last chapters, those late-night study sessions. Stay focused, stay disciplined, and remind yourself why you started. The finish line is right ahead of you.

That second wind in life shows up when you push past the temptation. It appears when you decide that your story isn't over - not yet. Just like a runner must keep moving to receive that burst of strength, you have to stay in motion.

But, you will miss it if you stop? You will miss if you assume the year is already "decided." You will miss it if you sit down when you should be pressing forward.

December isn't a finish line

- it's a launching pad. When you finish strong, you start strong. The momentum you build now follows you into 2026.

This year may not have been perfect, but perfection was never the goal. Growth was. Progress was. Strength was. And strength often shows itself most clearly when we push through tiredness, doubt, and delay - and discover a second wind waiting to carry us farther than we imagined.

Lift your head, square your shoulders, and take the next step. You're not done. The race isn't over.

Your second wind is here. Catch it - and finish 2025 strong.

NEWS

Jasmine Crockett Launches Texas Senate Campaign, Shaking Up Democratic Primary

Staff Report

Texas Rep. Jasmine Crockett officially entered the race for U.S. Senate on Monday, injecting new energy — and controversy — into a Democratic primary already brimming with tension. The Dallas lawmaker's announcement sets up a high-profile clash as Democrats look to make an aggressive bid to turn Texas blue and reclaim control of the Senate.

Crockett, now in her second term representing a deeply Democratic district, will face off against state Rep. James Talarico, another rising name in the party. While the path to victory in a state long dominated by Republicans remains steep, Democrats are banking on renewed voter enthusiasm and lingering backlash against former President Donald Trump to make

the improbable seem possible. The party still remembers 2018, when Beto O'Rourke came within striking distance of ousting Sen. Ted Cruz — the closest Democrats have come in decades to winning statewide.

The field narrowed just before Crockett's entry. Former Rep. Colin Allred, who previously challenged Cruz in 2024, bowed out days ahead of her announcement, citing concerns about splintering the vote and triggering a runoff. His departure cleared the lane for Crockett to seize the progressive mantle.

"For too long, Texas has sent Senators to Washington who protect the status quo while working families foot the bill," Crockett declared on her campaign website. "I'm running because Texans deserve a Senator who serves all 30 million of us — not one beholden to Donald

Trump or party politics."

Her campaign launch video featured audio of Trump mocking her as a "low IQ person" — a clip Crockett's team repurposed to emphasize her outspokenness. The move highlighted the combative tone she's known for, both in Congress and online.

Crockett had publicly wrestled with whether to jump into the race, saying she'd only do so if the numbers looked promising. Ultimately, she says, she was convinced that expanding the electorate — particularly among disillusioned and younger voters — could tilt the balance. Her campaign kickoff event in Dallas drew hundreds of supporters eager to see her message tested on a statewide stage.

A strong national fundraising base gives Crockett an early advantage. By the end of September, her congressio-



Jasmine Crockett

nal campaign had raised over \$6.5 million, much of it from small-dollar donors, and \$4.6 million remains on hand to fuel her Senate run.

But Crockett's brash style, while energizing to progressives, has also stirred controversy. Her fiery rhetoric — including calling Gov. Greg Abbott "hot wheels" and

mocking Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene during a committee hearing — has endeared her to some Democrats but alienated others. "We need candidates who aren't afraid to speak their minds," said Allison Campolo, chair of the Tarrant County Democratic Party. "Jasmine brings that passion — she's bold, fearless, and unapologetically progressive."

Not everyone is impressed. Republicans argue her confrontational persona won't resonate beyond her urban base. Sen. John Cornyn, who faces his own fight to keep his seat, suggested Monday that Crockett might actually be the easiest Democrat to defeat in November. "She wins the primary," Cornyn predicted, "but she's the worst candidate they could run."

Cornyn's own future isn't guaranteed. He's facing a bruising GOP pri-

mary that includes Texas as Attorney General Ken Paxton, who has rallied the hard right, and Rep. Wesley Hunt, a well-funded conservative challenger. The turmoil inside the Republican ranks has Democrats cautiously optimistic that a divided GOP could hand them a rare opening.

Still, Crockett's biggest challenge may be breaking out of her Dallas base to connect with voters across Texas's sprawling suburbs and rural regions. "She's a polished fighter, and people love that about her," said Democratic strategist Joel Montfort. "But winning statewide means convincing Texans in Houston, San Antonio, and the suburbs that her fight is their fight too."

Crockett's bid may be a long shot, but her presence ensures that the 2026 Texas Senate race will be anything but dull.



THE GRAMBLING CONNECTION

The Grambling Connection Wants to Thank Each and Every One of You for Your Support Throughout 2025. We Couldn't Have Made It Without the Community's Support! May We Continue to Serve You With the Same High Journalistic Quality and Integrity as We Have Become Known For!



We Wish You and Your Families A Very Merry Christmas and A Most Prosperous New Year!

- The Grambling Connection Staff -

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SUBMISSIONS

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How to submit a press release

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COMMUNITY

The Grambling Connection Receives Grant Award from Ruston-Lincoln Chamber of Commerce

Staff Report

On Tuesday, December 9, 2025, a press conference was held in Ruston to announce the recipients of the 2025 Workforce Development Grants given every year by the Ruston-Lincoln Chamber of Commerce. This year, The Grambling Connection Media Group was among the recipients. “It’s an honor to be selected and this will definitely help us expand our staff which we plan to do at the first of the year,” said Lena Claybon, Publisher and Editor-In-Chief, as she accepted the award.

Other recipients included: Enhanced

Skin and Beauty, Louisiana Tech Center for Hearing, and Choudrant Primary Care.

“Within the 3 years that we’ve been doing this, we’ve heard great things from the businesses we’ve been able to help. They’ve been able to provide resources for training that they may not have had previously or they been able to send staff off for training. So, the grants have been a big help.” Said Elizabeth Turnley, President of Ruston-Lincoln Chamber of Commerce.

To find out more about the Chamber’s workforce development initiative, please visit <https://www.rustonlincoln.org/>.



Lena Claybon Accepts Award from Ruston-Lincoln Chamber



Recipients pose for picture

Announcements

Date of Christmas Parade Has Changed!

The Annual Christmas Parade in Grambling, previously scheduled for Saturday, December 13, 2025 has changed to Friday, December 19, 2025. Parade starts at 4pm. Route remains the same. It starts at Gallot’s Barber Shop and goes down through the village then the campus and ends at the Catholic Center. Dr. Roebuck and Family will serve as Grand Marshalls.

Christmas sights around Lincoln Parish

Christmas activities happening around the parish as the month of December declines holds fun for all. On Thursday, Dec. 18, Ice skating, Ruston Sports Complex, (2001 Champions Way) 4 p.m. – 7 p.m. and the Ruston Rudolph 5K, also at the Sports Complex, 6:30 p.m.

Friday, 19 - Santa at Century Next Bank, 3 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Dec. 20 – Christmas at the Complex, Ruston Sports Complex Cookies and Coco with Santa, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.; noon – 2 p.m. ice skating; 5:30 p.m. holiday movie and hot cocoa; Dec. 22-23 - Ice skating, Ruston Sports Complex, 4 p.m. – 7 p.m. Dec. 29-30 - Ice skating, Ruston Sports Complex, 4 p.m. – 7 p.m.

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, Dec. 15. 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, Dec. 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 its last support group meeting for 2025 on Thursday, Dec. 18, at 2 p.m. in the Lincoln Parish Library, George Byrnside Conference Room, 910 North Trenton St., Ruston.

Anyone at least 18 years old may RSVP to jjones79aka@yahoo.com or call (318) 614-1961 or SJBurch57@gmail.com or call (318) 350- 1612. The meetings are free to the public and all are invited to attend.

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.

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.



Wishing You the
Peace of the Season

**Ruston Farmerville Arcadia
West Monroe Monroe Baton Rouge**




Louisiana National Bank

HAPPY
Holidays!



Kathy Holmes Giles Jerry Lewis Mayor Bradley Delores Smith John Brown DeVaria Ponton

During the most wonderful time of the year, we here at the City of Grambling, wish you a very Merry Christmas! It is our prayer that your days be filled with great peace and joy, as you enjoy this season with family and friends...

**Mayor Bradley & the City Council
Grambling, Louisiana**



COMMUNITY



Members of the HBCU BOOSTERS look over the menus.



Standing with their awards (l-r) Henry and Mary Kelly, Carl McCarter, standing in for Attorney John Belton, Beatrice Woods and Mike Stone.

By Joice M. Dunn

The president of The HBCU BOOSTERS Club, Jim “Bear” Maryland recently took time to recognize some members and supporters who meet the needs of others as well as organizations.

“I think it’s always im-

portant to honor those who give of their time and talent to help others in need,” explained Maryland. The organization has been in existence since 2022, as they began fund raisers of all kinds to support a request for a need of support. The awards started out with a presentation

to Mrs. Beatrice Woods, mother of Tommie Woods and member of the Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church of Ruston. Woods always found the time to assist someone in need. Henry and Mary Kelly were presented with an award for their joint support. HBCU BOOSTERS’ member Carl McCarter

presented an award to Attorney John Belton in his absence. Attorney Belton is the district attorney for Lincoln and Union Parishes. The award was to thank Attorney Belton for his support as well as his part in getting involved. Tommie Woods presented an award to Mike Stone, retired Lincoln

Parish Sheriff, for his involvement in supporting The BOOSTERS programs and Projects. “Before I retired from the sheriff’s office, the DARE program was started. If we can talk together rather than condemning each other, progress can be made and I’m behind that,” explained Stone.

A special thanks were also extended to Billy Norman, Roger Phillips, Gregory Williams, Troy and Patricia Brooks, Larry Proctor and others for their outstanding work on various projects. “These awards are just the beginning of the honors for those who give of their time,” said Maryland.

TRUE DENTAL CARE CELEBRATES 20 YEARS! "Dentistry From The Heart"

By Lena W. Claybon

Dr. Rhonda Pruitt will be celebrating 20 years of service on December 19, 2025. After overcoming a debilitating stutter and the loss of her only brother as a young girl, Dr. Pruitt would go on to build a practice that provides a much needed service to the area, thanks, in no small part, to her father. “I’m a Daddy’s girl.”, said Pruitt. “I wasn’t really thinking about moving back to Grambling until my father asked me if I would think about it.” Pruitt attended dental school in New Jersey and had planned on setting up practice there, but after her father asked and she “prayed about it”, she decided to look into it. After a brief stint in Jackson, MS, she ended up in Shreveport working for a community health center there. “I moved to Shreveport in 2000 and then around 2008 after my parents

became ill, I moved to Grambling to see after them but I was still commuting back and forth to Shreveport for work.” When asked, what made her decide to set up her own practice here, she said, “I didn’t. I I told you, everything I’ve done has been my father. So, my dad said, you ever thought about coming here and opening up a practice? I said, I never wanted to own a practice.” She went on to explain to him that owning your own practice meant having more responsibility including overhead and having to pay employees. It just wasn’t something she was interested in. “Working where I was working at a community health center, if the patients didn’t show, they just didn’t show. I was on salary.” But her father, as always, was very persuasive. He told her he even “looked into it” for her and asked around to see if people in the community thought a dental practice



Dr. Rhonda Pruitt

might do well here. So, she eventually decided to just try it for a short time to see what it would be like. The building that she currently occupies was a family health clinic already but owned by someone else. She started out

renting one room, then eventually took over renting the building and then buying the building! When asked what does she think has contributed to her success, she said, “We see the underserved. [We] see the people who really think they can’t afford it. And we make it affordable.” But not only does she provide dental services to the communities, she also services the prisons in the area. “I’ve worked at every jail in North Louisiana. I worked at the Jail at Caddo Correctional. I’m the detention center dentist. I’ve been there probably 16, 17 years. I worked at the jail in Jonesboro. I worked at Winnfield Correctional Center, and now, I work at the Richwood Correctional Center, seeing the ISIS inmates.” And, as if she’s not busy enough doing all that, she’s also an active supporter and spon-

sor of many community events such as being an active on-going title sponsor of Grambling Chamber of Commerce events, so much so that the Chamber named one of their annual awards after her, The Rhonda Pruitt Special Recognition Award. She also sponsors the Boys and Girls Club of America and NAACP activities. And, let’s not leave out, an on-going sponsor of many GSU Sports events, just to name a few. Pruitt is a proud member of the Epsilon Psi Omega chapter Alpha Kappa Alpha and a member of the Monroe Grambling chapter of Lynx. She is definitely a valuable part of the Grambling Community and surrounding areas as well and she would like to invite all out on Friday, the 19th, to her offices on Hwy 80 to help her celebrate her 20 years of service! Please come out and show her how much we appreciate her!

Celebrating

20

Years

of Service

True
Care
Dental
L.L.C.

"Dentistry from the Heart"

DR. RHONDA PRUITT

10:30AM-3PM

REFRESHMENTS SERVED

7412 HWY 80 RUSTON, LA 71270

DEC

19

2025



CHURCH NEWS

IN REMEMBRANCE

A LIFE WELL REMEMBERED

Dr. Geoffrey Niyonzima Rugege was born on June 16, 1940 in Kabale District, Rwanda. He was the oldest of 10 children born to William and Alice Rugege. In his formative years, he attended Kigezi High School and graduated from Ntare School. He earned his bachelor's degree in English from Makerere University in 1966. Shortly after, he joined Uganda Publishing House where he served as the General Manager un-

til 1975. Due to the political turmoil in Uganda, he fled to the United States in 1976 and began working with Viking Press. Dr. Rugege went on to complete his PhD in Linguistics from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Professor Rugege was deeply committed to his family. He married Anne Nyarubona in 1972, whom he fondly called his "Sunshine". The Professor was a loving father to Rita (Allan), Chris (An-



Dr. Geoffrey Niyonzima Rugege

gelah), Sheila (Eric), Sheba (Andrew), Crystal (Tony) and Carol. He was also a proud grandfather to his eleven grandchildren. A renowned educationist, Professor Rugege was the epitome of servant leadership. He lived by the Rotary values of "service above self" and dedicated his life to serving the communities he was a part of. Professor Rugege was an educator, mentor, community leader and father-figure to many.

He spent over 30 years in the United States working in higher education. He served as Professor and Head of the English Department at Grambling State University for over 20 years. As a champion of education, he helped over 40 students (from Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi) become Grambling graduates. His house became a home away from home for many international students of all nationalities.

Church Announcements

Springhill Church to sponsor candlelight service

The Spring Hill Baptist Church will hold a candlelight service Wednesday, December 17, at 6 p.m. The church is located on 727 Dick Store Road, Simsboro and Rev. Eric Caldwell is the pastor.

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 December 8, meeting was instructed by Rev. McCarthur Simmons of Hebron B.C., Arcadia and Rev. Elliott Abney of Love Chapel B.C., Ruston. The subject discussed was Brothers Inspiring Brothers. The next meeting will be held on Monday, Jan. 12, 2026. The meeting is spearheaded by Patrick Jefferson, former state representative, along with invited speakers. Every man is invited to come and worship.

China Grove lifts up Christmas in style

China Grove Baptist Church invites the community to share Christmas at the Grove Saturday, Dec. 20, at 4 p.m. The church is pastored by Rev. Damien Wilson in Ruston.

Love Chapel to hold Christmas program

The Love Chapel Baptist Church of Ruston will hold a Christmas program on Sunday, Dec. 21, during 11 a.m. service at the church. At 6 p.m. the church will combine with Zion Hill of Ruston, pastored by Rev. A. Wise to hold a Christmas event. 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 Churchof-ChristatGrambling@gmail.com or 318- 596-1038. The Church is located at 146 King St.

New Hope Church to hold community-wide Bible Study

The New Hope Baptist Church of Ruston will hold a noon community-wide Bible Study each Wednesday. The church is located at 301 W. Vaughn Ave., Ruston.

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

Area Church Directory

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

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

BAPTIST

Alabama, 16061 Hwy. 151, Arcadia
Barnett Springs, 1601 S. Barnett Springs Rd., Ruston
China Grove Missionary, 406 Vernon St., Ruston
Christ Temple, 7349 Hwy 80, Ruston
Church of Restoration, 285 Main St., Grambling
Cook, 2000 Cooktown Rd, Ruston
Corinth, 4327 Hw 545, Dubach
Countyline, 7426 Hwy. 146, Ruston
Dayspring Baptist Ministries, 3191 South Vienna St, Ruston
Emmanuel, 1200 Farmerville Hwy., Ruston
Fellowship, 6476 Hwy 151, Dubach
Fellowship, 1572 Highway 507 South, Simsboro
First, 117 Oak St., - One block south of Hwy. 80 in Choudrant
First, Hico St., Dubach
First, 200 S. Trenton St., Ruston
First, Simsboro
Friendship, 143 West Sixth Street, Bernice
Grace, 2808 Trenton Ave., Ruston
Grace Bible, 216 Rough Edge Rd., Ruston
Greater Pleasant Grove, 1270 Golf Course Rd., Unionville
Greater St. Luke, 163 St. Luke Church Rd, Arcadia
Gumspring, 3117 Hwy 151, Farmerville
Hebron, Love Chapel, 1525 Sikes St, Ruston
Hico, 653 Hwy. 152, Dubach
Hopewell, 7657 Fellowship Rd., Hwy 151, Dubach
Lane Chapel, 1016 McAllister, Ruston
Lanes Chapel, Hwy. 151 Downs ville
Liberty Hill, Simsboro
Longstraw, 1799 Styles, Ranch Rd.,
Love Chapel, 1525 Sikes St, Ruston
Macedonia, No.1, Rt. 2, Dubach
Macedonia, No. 2, 489 E. Sibley Rd., Choudrant
Mineral Springs, 4599 Hwy 822, Dubach
Mount Harmony, 210 Mt. Harmony Church Rd, Ruston
Mount Calm, 566 Mount Calm Rd., Simsboro
Mount Olive, 571 Mt. Olive Rd. Grambling, Louisiana.
Mount Olive Outreach, 2817 S. Service Road W., Ruston
Mount Pisgah, Hwy. 3061, Ruston

Mount Sinai, 2269 Hwy. 145, Choudrant
Mount Vernon, 1356 Hwy. 167 N., Dubach
Mount Zion, 2586 Hwy 150., Grambling
Mount Zion No. 2, 113 California Plant Road, Dubach
New Hope, Choudrant
New Hope, 302 W. Vaughn, Ruston
New Liberty Hill, Hwy. 544, Simsboro
New Living Word Ministries, 1900 W. Barnett Springs, Ruston
New Pilgrim Rest, Inc., 2697 Elm St., Arcadia
New Prospect, 3438 Hwy. 167 N., Dubach
New Prosperity, 1378 Prosperity Church, Clay
New Rocky Valley, 2155 Martin Luther King Ave., Grambling
Northview Missionary, Highway 33, Ruston
Olive Grove, 3138 Olive Grove Rd, Choudrant
Pilgrim Rest, 622 W. Line Ave., Ruston
Pine Grove, 470 Chandler Rd., Ruston
Pleasant Grove, 1366 Pleasant Grove Road, Choudrant
Pleasant Grove, "The Oasis in the Woods", 446 Bowden Rd., Ruston
Pleasant Hill, 1127 Mondy Rd, Simsboro
Rock Corner & Garden of Prayer, 824 Rock Corner Rd, Dubach, off Hwy. 33, 14 miles north of Ruston
Rocky Valley, Simsboro
Solid Rock, 1511 West California Hwy 80, Ruston
Southside, 3191 South Vienna St., Ruston
Springhill, 727 Dicks Store Rd., Ruston
St. David, Vienna.
St. John, Old Grambling Rd., Ruston.
St. Mary, 1114 Larson St., Ruston.
St. Peter, 404 Longstraw Rd., Ruston
St. Rest, 09 Walker Rd., Choudrant
St. Rest, Hwy. 146 West, Dubach
Temple, 1515 S. Service Rd. W. Ruston
True Believers, 184 CCC Road, Ruston
The Springs, (A ministry of Temple Baptist Church) 1601 S. Barnett Springs Ave., Ruston
The Springs.life The Word, 504 S. Main St., Grambling University - 2856 W. California, Ruston
Vernon, 190 Vernon-Eros Road, Ruston
Woods Chapel, 326 Hwy 454, Ruston
Zion Hill, 505 Lee St., Ruston
Zion Traveler, 1201 Martin Luther King Dr, Ruston

CATHOLIC

St. Benedict, 471 Main St., Grambling

St. Thomas Aquinas, 810 Carey Avenue, Ruston
CHURCH OF CHRIST
Church of Christ, 2902 Hwy. 80 West, Ruston
Church of Christ, 146 King St., Grambling
Northside, 1804 N. Trenton St., Ruston
Orleans Cir. Church of Christ, 2103 Orleans Cir., Ruston
Ruston, 2300 W. Woodward Ave., Ruston, www.rustonchurchofchrist.org

EPISCOPAL

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

METHODIST

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

PENTECOSTAL

Anchor Tabernacle, Exit 93 from I-20 then South 1/2 mile, Choudrant
First Pentecostal, Corner of Kentucky and Goodwin Ruston
King's Court UPC, 2401 S. Service Rd. West, Ruston
LifePoint Church, 1018 S. Vienna St., Ruston. lifepointruston.com
The Pentecostals, 2851 Hwy 33 North, Ruston
Powerhouse Temple of Christ Apostolic, 101 Main St., Grambling
United Pentecostal, Dubach
Zion Temple Apostolic Faith Deliverance - Eastern Hills, off Beacon Light Rd., Ruston
Voice of Revival Ministry - 304 W. California St., Ruston
PRESBYTERIAN Alabama (USA), 2091 Hwy 145, Choudrant

Covenant Reformed, 2106 Cooktown Rd., Ruston
Greenwood, Lincoln Parish Rd. 181, between Mitcham's & Hwy. 146, Ruston
Ruston (USA), 212 N. Bonner St.

OTHERS

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



HEALTH & WELLNESS

CHARMING'S CORNER

The Spiritual Christmas: Returning to the Heart of the Season

By Charming Davis

Every December, the world becomes louder. Stores overflow with sales, expectations rise, people rush, families argue, and the pressure to “perform” the holidays builds. Everywhere we turn, Christmas is presented as a checklist: buy the gifts, decorate the tree, match the pajamas, post the photos, and make it all look perfect. But beneath all that noise, Christmas was never meant to be about perfection. It was meant to be about presence — spiritual presence, divine awareness, and human connection. Spiritually, the true meaning of Christmas has always centered around rebirth, light returning to the world, and the reminder that we all carry a divine spark within us. Long before Christmas became

commercialized, ancient cultures honored this time of year as the moment when darkness reaches its peak and light begins to rise again. It is a season of hope. A season of restoration. A season where the veil is thin and divine energy moves closer to the human heart. Yet somewhere in the world’s rush to make Christmas shiny and marketable, we’ve drifted from what truly matters. We’ve replaced meaning with material. We’ve buried the spiritual under the superficial. And many people feel it — that emptiness that comes even after the gifts are unwrapped and the food is eaten. The truth is this: Christmas is a spiritual doorway, not a commercial event. This season asks us to slow down and reconnect with the divine — the divine in our-



Charming Davis

selves, in others, and in the world around us. It calls us to remember that generosity is an energy, not a price tag. True generosity can come as forgiveness, compassion, quality time, or simply being present for someone who feels unseen. When we choose to honor Christmas in a spiritual way, the season transforms. Instead of stress, we feel

grounding. Instead of loneliness, we feel connection. Instead of obligation, we feel purpose. Christmas also teaches us about the miracle of birth — not just the birth of one child, but the birth of new beginnings in all of us. Every year, this sacred season asks: What in you is ready to be born? What light within you is ready to awaken? What hope have you forgotten that needs to be restored? The holidays aren’t about doing more — they’re about remembering more. Remembering peace. Remembering unity. Remembering that spiritual love is bigger than any gift and lasts far longer than any decoration. When you approach Christmas from a spiritual lens, you start to see the season differently. You speak with more kindness. You treat

others with softness. You listen to your body, your spirit, your ancestors, and the signs around you. You learn that the holiday isn’t about receiving or even giving — it’s about aligning. This year, instead of letting the world dictate the meaning of Christmas, choose to redefine it for yourself. Light a candle. Offer a prayer. Cook a meal with intention. Give thanks for the people you love. Release the ones you’ve outgrown. Honor your healing. Celebrate your growth. Whether you observe Christmas traditionally, spiritually, or culturally, the heart of this season is the same: Light always returns. Hope always rises. Love always wins. And that is the true meaning of Christmas — a divine reminder that even in the darkest moments, we are never without light.

Recognizing symptoms and causes of depression

by Jeannetta Stephens-Jones

Everyone feels sad or low sometimes, but these feelings usually pass with time. Depression (also known as major depression disorder or clinical depression) is different. Depression can cause severe symptoms that affect how a person feels, thinks, and handles daily activities, i.e., sleeping, eating, or working. Depression is a serious mental health condition and it is more than just feeling sad or going through a rough patch. This mental health condition requires understanding and medical care. If depression is left untreated, then it could be devastating for the people who have it and for their families. Depression can affect anyone. A person’s age, sex race, ethnicity, culture, socio-economic does not have a bearing on the diagnosis. However, according to research genetic, biological, environment, and psychological factors play a role in the disorder. What are the different types of depression?

According to National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) there are two common types of depression. Major depression includes symptoms of depressed mood or loss of interest, most of the time for at least 2 weeks, which may interfere with daily activities. Persistent depressive disorder consists of less severe symptoms that could usually last for 2 years. The other types of depression include the following: Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) – this disorder comes and go with the seasons with symptoms starting in late fall ending during spring/summer. Depression with symptoms of psychosis is a severe form of depression in which an individual may experience psychosis symptoms, such as delusions or hallucinations. It is also reported that Bipolar disorder could involve depressive episodes. What are some causes of depression? There is no single cause of depression; however, it can be triggered or occur spontaneously and it is believed that there is a combination of biological, social, and psychological factors



Jeannetta Jones

that contribute to depression. According to National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) it is believed by scientists that several other factors contribute to the cause of depression such as: Trauma: A traumatic experience at an early age can cause long-term changes in how the brain responds to fear and stress. These changes could be the reason individuals who have experienced a childhood trauma are more likely to experience depression. Genetics: Mood disorders and risk of

suicide tend to run in families, but genetic inheritance is only one factor. Life circumstances: Marital status, financial standing and where a person lives have an effect on whether a person develops depression. Brain structure: Imaging studies have shown that the frontal lobe of the brain becomes less active when a person is depressed. Other medical conditions: People who have a history of sleep disturbances, medical illness, chronic pain, anxiety, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD) are likely to develop depression. Drug and alcohol abuse: Approximately 30% of people with substance abuse problems have depression. What are signs and symptoms of depression? Depression may occur only once during a lifetime; however, it is typical for some individuals to experience multiple episodes which may occur most

of the day and may include the following: Feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness or hopelessness. Feelings of irritability, frustration, or restlessness. Feelings of guilt, worthiness, or helplessness. Frequent or recurrent thoughts of death, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts or suicide. Help is available for depression and you do not have to deal with it by yourself. Remember that depression is more than a bout of the blues, depression is not a weakness and you can’t just snap out of it. Depression may require long-term treatment with medication, psychotherapy or both. Don’t get discouraged. Take the next step and get help. 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.

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ARTS & CULTURE

NAACP & BET Announce Date of “57th NAACP Image Awards”

NAACP and BET announced the “57th NAACP Image Awards” will air live from the Pasadena Civic Auditorium on Saturday, February 28, at 8:00 PM ET/PT on BET. Beloved comedian, actor, and multi-NAACP Image Award winner Deon Cole will return as host.

“BET is honored to continue our longstanding partnership with the NAACP to bring the Image Awards to the world in a way that uplifts and celebrates our stories,” said Connie Orlando, EVP of Specials, Music Programming & Music Strategy at BET. “This show is a powerful reflection of our collective excellence, and we’re thrilled to have Deon Cole return as host of the 57th NAACP Image Awards. His authenticity, sharp wit and deep connection to our community make him the perfect guide for this unforgettable night.”

“As a comedian, actor, and cultural icon, Deon Cole has consistently used his talent to entertain, uplift, and inspire. His humor, deep appreciation for the culture, and commitment to our community has cemented him as an entertainment legend,” said Derrick Johnson, NAACP President and CEO. “It is truly an honor to have him return as the host of this year’s 57th NAACP Image Awards. His presence will guide us through an evening of unforgettable moments as we celebrate the visionaries and trailblazers who continue to define and revolutionize culture.”

Deon Cole is a comedian, writer, and actor, who can be seen in the title role of BET+’s dark comedy series, AVERAGE JOE, from McG, which has garnered incredible reviews from Hollywood Re-

porter and Entertainment Weekly. Most recently, Deon can be seen in THE MADNESS starring Colman Domingo, a political drama thriller for Netflix from Clement Virgo and VJ Boyd, produced by Chernin. Additionally, he can be seen in Blitz

Bazawule’s critically acclaimed remake of THE COLOR PURPLE, the film scored 16 nominations at the 55th NAACP Image Awards, winning 11, including Outstanding Motion Picture. Before that, Deon starred in Jeymes Samuel’s THE HARDER THEY FALL for Netflix opposite Idris Elba, Regina King, Zazie Beetz, and LaKeith Stanfield. Deon was featured in Kenya Barris and Jonah Hill’s YOU PEOPLE for Netflix, acting opposite Jonah Hill, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, and Eddie Murphy.

Deon was previously seen as Charlie on ABC’s BLACK-ISH and Freeform’s GROWNISH. For his work on BLACK-ISH, Deon won three consecutive Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series awards at the 2020, 2021, and 2022 NAACP Image Awards. Deon can be heard as the voice of Dave, for DreamWorks Animation’s Netflix series, KIPO AND THE AGE OF WONDERBEASTS. Previously, he



starred as Detective Daniel “DJ” Tanner on the TBS comedy ANGIE TRIBECA opposite Rashida Jones. Additionally, Deon was featured in the Ice Cube-led BARBERSHOP series. Next, Deon can be heard as a voice in the BET+ animated series, LIL KEV, opposite Kevin Hart and Wanda Sykes.

In standup, Deon recently released his third one-hour special for Netflix, OK, MISTER. His previous special, CHARLEEN’S BOY, was released by Netflix in 2022. His earlier special, COLE HEARTED, also for Netflix, was released in 2019 after the success of his appearance in Netflix’s THE STANDUPS. His previous one-hour special, DEON COLE’S: COLE BLOODED SEMINAR, was shot for Comedy Central. His stand-up documentary, WORKIN’ IT OUT, debuted exclusively on Netflix Is A Joke’s YouTube channel, and has garnered 6 million views across all socials.

Globally recognized as one of the most distinguished multicultural award shows, the “57th NAACP Image Awards” continues its tradition of excellence, uplifting values that inspire equality, justice, and progressive change, and highlighting artists com-

mitted to these values.

This year, NAACP is introducing two new categories: Outstanding Literary Work – Journalism, recognizing excellence in nationally distributed journalism that informs, uplifts, and authentically reflects on experiences, issues, or perspectives significantly affecting the Black community, or U.S. national affairs through a lens of racial equity, social justice, or community impact; and Outstanding Editing in a Motion Picture or Television Series, Movie, or Special, honoring excellence in post-production editing that enhances storytelling, strengthens narrative flow, and amplifies emotional impact.

One of the most iconic annual celebrations of Black excellence, the NAACP Image Awards draws the biggest and brightest stars in Hollywood. Previous years’ attendees and winners include Kamala Harris, Dave Chappelle, Keke Palmer, The Wayans Family, Deon Cole, Cynthia Erivo, June Ambrose, Usher, New Edition, Fantasia Barrino, Angela Bassett, Zendaya, Cortney B. Vance, Will Smith, Viola Davis, Beyoncé, Nicco Annan, Ruth E. Carter, Glynn Turman, Quinta Brunson, Amanda Gorman, Nia Long, Keith David, Jennifer Hudson, Stacey Abrams, Tabitha Brown, Dwayne Wade & Gabrielle Union, Tems, Erica Campbell, Chris Brown, Bruno Mars, Anderson Paak, Silk Sonic, Rihanna, Quavo, Takeoff, Sheryl Lee Ralph, Yara Shahidi, Issa Rae, Janelle Monáe, Tracee Ellis Ross, Serena Williams, Kerry Washington, Method Man, Dominique Thorne, Austin Scott, Tyler James Williams, Kyla Pratt, Jabari Banks, and many more.

Book review: ‘Beam Me Up Scottie’

By Joice M. Dunn

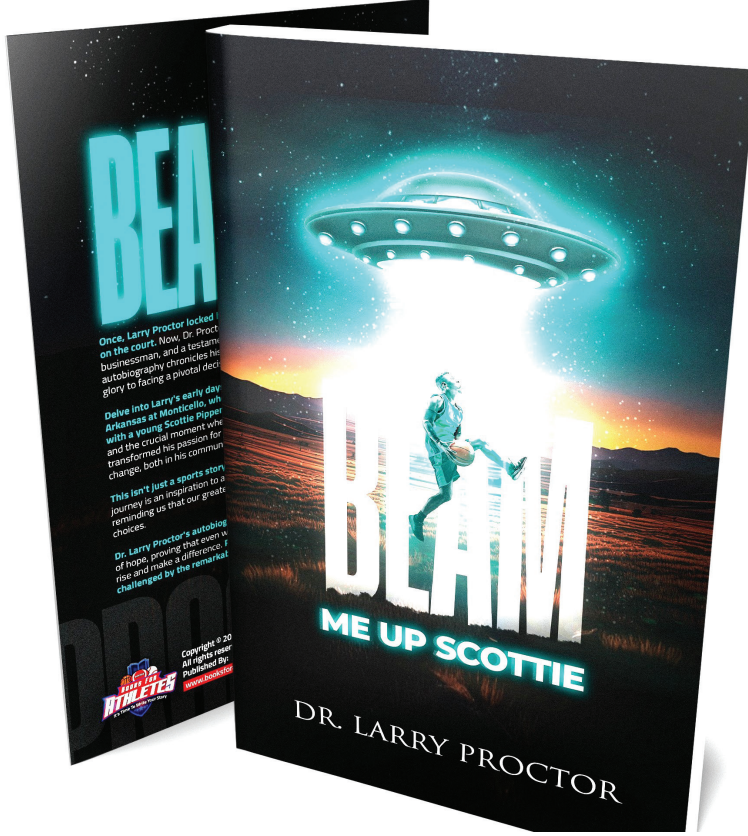
Dr. Larry Proctor, an assistant professor - Coordinator of Kinesiology, at Grambling

State University since 2017, recent book “Beam Me Up Scottie” has caught the reading eye of many.

After reading the book, “Beam Me Up Scottie” two area reared natives encouraged others to pick up the book for themselves.

“Yes, this is a must-read book. Starting from early childhood you learn that challenges will come your way. Life itself is a journey. Hats off to Dr Proctor for he speaks of some of the high and low peaks of his journey,” explained Mary Kelly, Grambling Credit Union retiree.

“Beam Me Up Scottie is an essential book. In part, because its author, Dr. Larry D. Proctor, recognizes the importance (the absolute ‘central importance’) of health, wellness, and wellbeing as true measures of our best life. But perhaps its foremost importance lies in the personal and personable illustrations shared, reminding us that our individual goals and benchmarks around matters of health, wellness, and well-being cannot be achieved in isolation.



Instead, with guidance offered by Dr. Proctor, we best achieve our health goals when we (each) see ourselves as key, indispensable parts of a larger team effort,” according to Dr. James A. Chaffers D.Arch., FAIA Emeritus Professor of Architecture University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. Dr.

Chaffers is a native of Ruston.

In Dr. Proctor’s model, our personal wellness goals are best attained as we achieve Balance (physical, spiritual, emotional), gain Empowerment (through expanded awareness), take personal Accountability (for our health choices), and take full-est advantage of ‘health mod-



Proctor

els’ designed to address ‘culture-specific’ health challenges . . . all within a health model tailored for Multiculturalism. “Beam Me Up Scottie” is an essential book also, because throughout his 93 or so written pages, Dr. Proctor consistently enlivens (and enlightens) us by highlighting his own health’s journey — a faith-driven, truth-sharing (lessons learned’) journey, that respectfully reminds each of us, of our capacities, over and above any shortcomings.

“From the outset, Dr. Proctor proudly and confidently assures each of us that, despite health disparities, educational disparities, and sports disparities in our midst, “this book is your compass, your guide through life’s storms of self-doubt,” said Chaffers

He said, “He was particularly heartened by a written passage, intended (necessarily) for African Americans, but applicable to persons with ‘determined grit’ anywhere on the globe. There, Dr. Proctor reminds us all, that . . . “we come from a lineage of resilient warriors, dreamers, and history makers. We’re not built to break; we’re built to fly.”

“Beam Me Up Scottie” is an essential ‘companion,’ finally, because Dr. Proctor does not (just) write to write.’ He ‘writes to invite’ . . . others to join an all-inclusive approach to health care; care, focused on promoting overall wellbeing rather than on the reduction of disease. Practically speaking, Dr. Proctor is doing so through the establishment of BEAM LLC. Ultimately, through the continued refinement of his BEAM LLC, Model, Dr. Proctor’s aim is no less than to redefine our understanding of health and well-being. In continuing pursuit of his goal, I am imagining Dr. Proctor guided by his advice to readers of ‘Beam Me Up Scottie’ . . . Let this book be your fuel, your fire, your reminder that you are worthy, capable, and destined for greatness,” said Chaffers.

The book can still be found on Amazon for \$24.87 with free delivery from Dec. 19-20.



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SPORTS



Finishing Strong: Baseball Legend Gary Eave Returns 47 Years Later to Complete Bachelors Degree

By Strategic Communications Dept - GSU

Gary Eave has always tried to live by one message his coach, Wilbert Ellis, repeated often: finish strong. An All-American athlete, a devoted husband, a father and grandfather, a minister, and a man shaped by faith, that charge became more than a motivational phrase—it grew into a covenant. One tied to the woman he loved, the family they raised, the coach who shaped him, and the legacy he hoped to leave behind.

Now, nearly 47 years after first enrolling at Grambling State University in 1981, Eave is coming home to honor the commitments that shaped his life.

At 62 years old, he will graduate from the university that gave him his voice, his values, his community, and the beginnings of the life he built.

The Start of a Life-Shaping Journey

Eave’s Grambling journey began long before he wore the uniform. As a young boy attending Baptist Youth Encampments on campus, he found community, connection, and the seeds of purpose. So when Coach Ellis—who first spotted the tall, slender athlete from Bastrop, Louisiana—offered him a scholarship, it felt like destiny.

“I kept looking at him and said, that guy’s a ball player,” Ellis said. “But beyond talent, Gary had character. He came from a strong, spiritual family. Grambling was the place he needed to be.”

Under Ellis, Eave flourished. He became an All-American pitcher, led Grambling to three SWAC championships, and helped secure NCAA tournament appearances. His talent carried him to the Atlanta Braves, Seattle Mariners, and San Francisco Giants, and allowed him to see parts of the world he never imagined.

But his life’s greatest chapter would begin not in a stadium, but in a classroom.

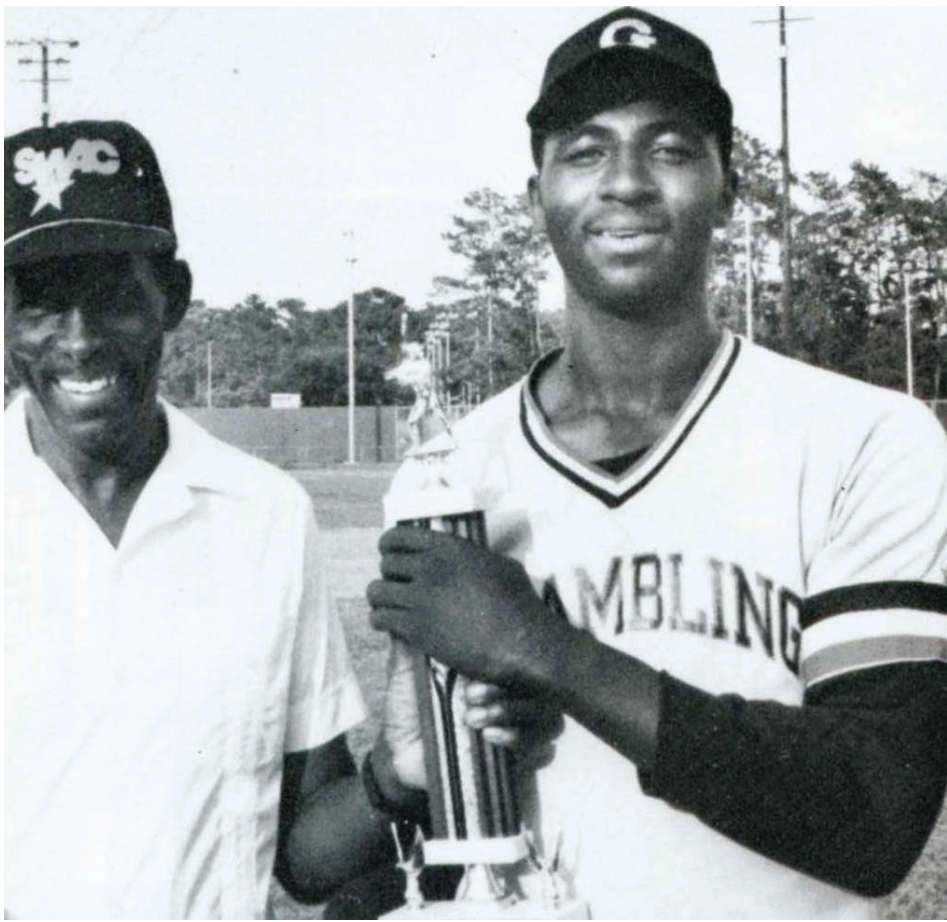
A Love Built at Grambling State

In Carver Hall’s biology lab in 1982, Gary met Kathy Grimm, a fellow freshman whose warmth and spirit would change his life forever. They built a love that spanned 42 years—raising children, serving in ministry, supporting one another through every chapter, and staying deeply tied to the university that brought them together.

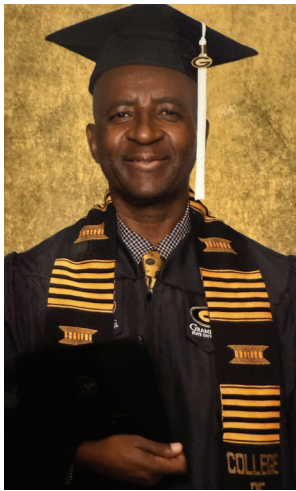
Eave said that Kathy became his constant encouragement, his accountability, his belief, his voice when he doubted himself, and the person who most wanted him to finish his degree.

“She cheered me in baseball, in life, in ministry,” he said. “Completing my degree was always her desire for me.”

Two of their children graduated from Grambling State University, and a third from Dillard University. Their mantle holds the degrees of the next generation—symbols of possibility, endurance, and family legacy. But Gary always felt one



MVP 1985



Gary Eave

frame was missing.

“I wanted my degree to sit on the mantle right next to my children’s,” he said. “I wanted my grandchildren to see that I didn’t give up. That I finished what I started.”

When Kathy passed away in May 2024, Eave said the grief was devastating. But the promise he made to her—and the legacy he wanted to model for their family—rose to the surface stronger than ever.

A Pivotal Decision

Though institutions near his home welcomed him, Eave couldn’t imagine finishing anywhere else.

“Everything about my life was embedded in Grambling [State],” he said. “To earn a degree anywhere else wouldn’t match the story God wrote for me.”

So in summer 2024, carrying the weight of loss but the determination of love, he returned to campus.

Advisors guided him toward completing a Bachelor’s degree in General Studies with a minor in Criminal Justice, honoring both his previous coursework and his new season of life.

He re-enrolled in July—studying through waves of grief, leaning on faith, and remembering the commitments that defined him.

“There were times I was reading through tears,” he said. “But I could still hear my wife cheering. I could still hear Coach Ellis saying, ‘Finish strong.’ And I knew I had to finish—for all of them.”

From the Mound to Ministry

Today, Eave serves as an associate pastor in Franklin, Louisiana, leading Love and a Hurting Heart, a ministry supporting individu-

als healing from trauma. His approach—rooted in empathy, accountability, and spiritual grounding—reflects lessons learned at Grambling State, where community, care, and character were part of everyday life.

He still connects with former professors, staff members, and mentors who helped mold him—proof of just how deeply the Grambling State community invests in its students.

“I never forgot how Grambling [State] embraced me,” he said. “Their love shaped the man I am.”

For Coach Ellis, Eave’s return is both personal and profound.

“Gary was an All-American and a leader,” Ellis said. “But more importantly, he kept his promise—to himself, to his family, and to Grambling. He returned. And

he finished strong. I’m very proud.”

On December 5, when Gary crossed the stage, he carried more than academic achievement with him. He carried a promise to his wife, gratitude to his parents, admiration for his coach, pride for his children, and a message of perseverance for his grandchildren.

“For my grandchildren to see this moment—to know what’s possible—that means everything,” he said. “This degree is for all of them.”

For Eave, earning his degree at Grambling State doesn’t simply close a chapter. It completes a life story grounded in faith, love, family, legacy, and loyalty.

“I feel complete,” he said. “Grambling [State] gave me so much. And now, I’ve finished what I started.”



LP looking forward to the Annual Michael Lyons Classic

By Joice M. Dunn

Lincoln Prep will hold The Michael Lyons Classic Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026, at the Lincoln Preparatory Basketball Gymnasium in Grambling.

The Lyons Classic started during the 2023 – 2024 season as an annual celebration of Coach Michael Lyons Legacy with Grambling Laboratory School. “It’s a day where some of the best teams along the I-20 Interstate matchup for a good day of basketball,” said Antonio Hudson, Lincoln Prep basketball coach. Hudson was also a former player of Lyons.

Coach Lyons spent his early years in Monroe, Louisiana where he attended Swayze Elementary and Richwood High Schools. He later moved to Ruston, where he graduated from Lincoln High School in 1969. He earned a bachelor’s degree in health and physical education in 1973. Also, he received a master’s degree in education administration from Louisiana Tech University and a master’s degree in Sports Administration from Grambling State University.

In 1979, he was hired as the Girls and Boys Basketball Coach at Grambling Laboratory High School. Along with coaching, Lyons became assistant principal in 1996 and director of athletics in 2001. His career spanned thirty years, all of which were at Grambling Laboratory High School.

During his tenure as a coach, he was able to instill in his players and students a willingness to work hard, to learn and to succeed. His positive attitude and love for the game and kids was evident throughout the school and community.

“Only the strongest team will survive after the classic is over,” said Hudson.

The 14 teams facing off in the classic will be Lincoln Prep, Calvary, Gibsland, Union, Huntington, Sterlington, Richwood, Arcadia, Denham Springs, Ruston, Peabody, Bossier, Catholic-BR and Red River.

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