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THE GRAMBLING CONNECTION

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9 Justices on the Supreme Court or 13? Battle revived in Congress

WASHINGTON — As public opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court flags amid decisions that have roiled the nation, Democrats renewed calls ahead of the midterms to expand the high court, while House Republicans attempted but failed to pass a constitutional amendment last week that proposes to cap the number at nine.

The House voted 212-206 Wednesday on a constitutional amendment to codify the number of Supreme Court justices at nine. A two-thirds majority was needed.

One Democrat, Rep. Don Davis of North Carolina, supported the Republican-led resolution.

Over the weekend, Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-S.C., said, "I think that we are in a position now that calls from some significant actions taken by the Congress.

"And we ought to expand — and 13 is a pretty good number. A baker's dozen would be a good number to have on the court," the 17-term House Democrat said on NBC News' "Meet the Press with Kristen Welker."

Clyburn said conservatives on the court, specifically naming Justice Clarence Thomas, have decided to "take the country back" in time.

In late April, the Supreme Court's conservative super majority struck down a protection in the Voting Rights Act that assured the vote of majority Black congressional districts could not be diluted.

In June, the court upheld the Constitution's 14th Amendment guaranteeing birthright citizenship, but the decision was not unanimous. Four justices dissented, arguing that there are some exceptions for certain babies born to immigrants on U.S. soil, depending on their parents' immigration status.

Clyburn is not the only Democrat to call for court expansion. Former Vice President Kamala Harris, a likely 2028 presidential hopeful, also advocated for a 13-justice high court during July 31 comments at the National Urban League meeting in Nashville, Tennessee.

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Lincoln Preparatory School Prepares Students for Real-World Voting

GRAMBLING, La. — Lincoln Preparatory School students received a firsthand lesson in democracy this week as the school partnered with the Louisiana Secretary of State's Office to conduct school-wide student elections using an experience modeled after Louisiana's voting process.

Representatives from the Secretary of State's Office visited Lincoln Prep on Monday, August 31, providing students with an opportunity to experience the voting process while learning about elections, civic responsibility and the importance of making their voices heard.

Rather than limiting civic education to the classroom, Lincoln Prep used the school-wide elections to give students a practical understanding of how citizens participate in democracy.

"Preparing students for the future means preparing them to be active and informed members of their communities," said Rashid Young, Executive Director/CEO of Lincoln Preparatory School.

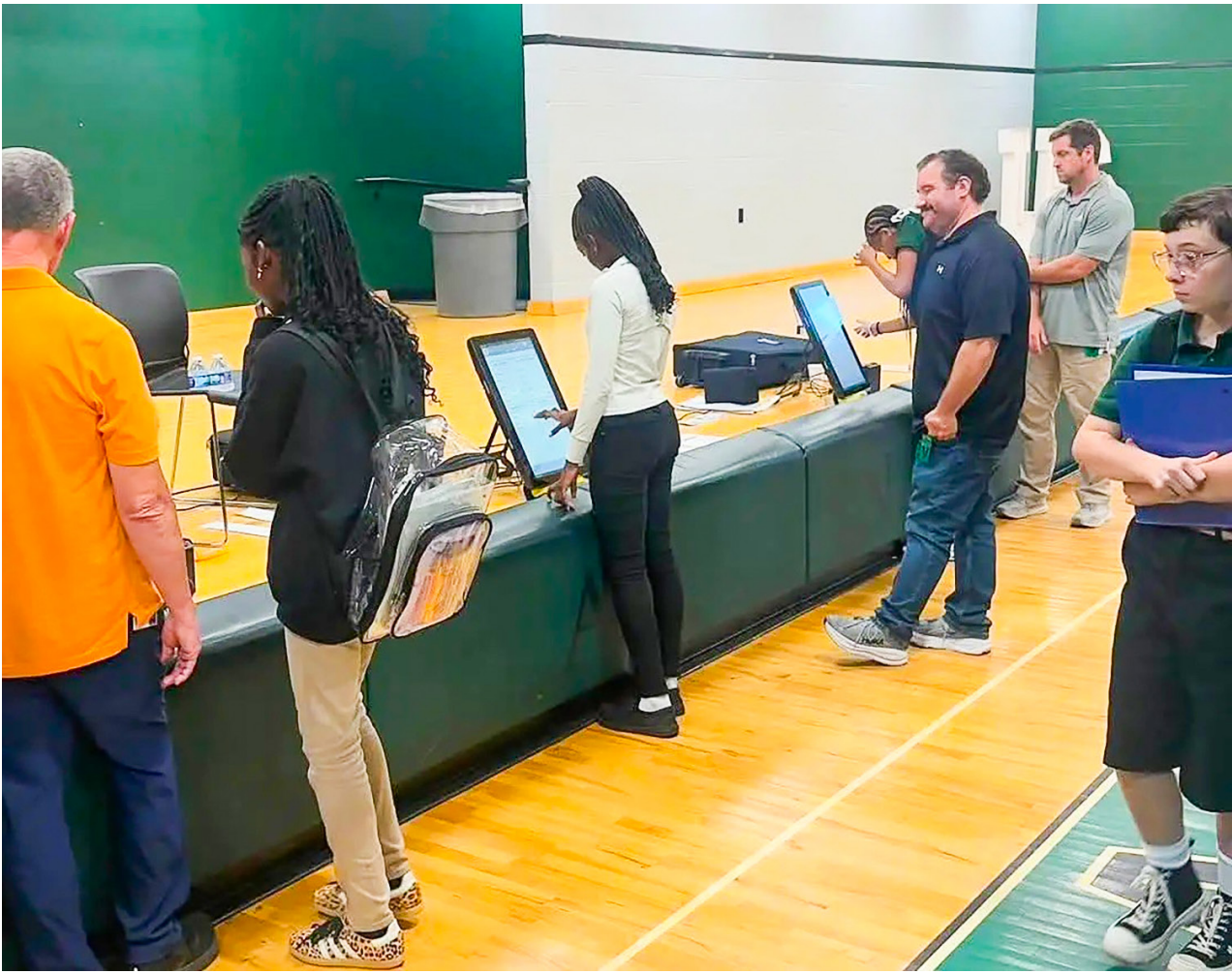
"Our students should understand that their voices matter and that civic participation comes with both rights and responsibilities. We are grateful to the Louisiana Secretary of State's Office for helping us turn that lesson into a real experience for our students."

The initiative is part of Lincoln Prep's broader effort to expand experiential learning and expose students to opportunities beyond traditional classroom instruction.

School leaders say partnerships with state agencies, universities, businesses and community organizations will continue to play an important role in preparing students for college, careers, leadership and civic life.

Lincoln Prep also thanked Caleb, John, Doug and Dustin from the Secretary of State's Office for working directly with students and helping demonstrate how the voting process works.

"As educators, we want our students to leave Lincoln Prep prepared not only to earn a diploma, but to lead, and contribute," Young added. "Experiences like this help us develop the next generation of voters, community leaders and public servants."



Instructors advise students on use of voting machines

Louisiana's Medicaid program will lose another provider, affecting 290,000 people



(LaIlluminator) Louisiana will lose one of its five Medicaid insurance plans at the end of the year, according to information the Louisiana Department of Health provided Tuesday.

The Healthy Blue plan, offered by Elevance Health and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana, will no longer be available to Medicaid recipients in 2027. Approximately 290,000 people are members of that plan who will have to transfer to one of the four remaining options.

Those include Aetna Better Health of Louisiana, AmeriHealth Caritas, Humana Healthy Horizons and Louisiana Healthcare Connections. Medicaid programs provide publicly funded health insurance to lower-income families, people who are pregnant and those with disabilities.

"Additional resources for affected members will be available to ensure this is a seamless transition, and no one is left without the coverage they need," Louisiana Medicaid executive director Seth Gold said in the health department's news release.

During a quarterly earnings call in July, Elevance Health had announced it intended to leave several state Medicaid markets over the next 12 to 18 months. It pulled out of Washington D.C.'s local Medicaid plan in August, according to Fierce Healthcare.

Healthy Blue currently has the second large enrollment of any private Medicaid plan in Louisiana.

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OPINION

OP-ED: From Selma to South Los Angeles: An Unsung Voting Rights Foot Soldier Says the Fight Isn’t Over

By Stephen Oduntan

Leatha Davis was a teenager when she marched in Selma, survived violent attacks and testified in a federal case that helped clear the way for the Selma-to-Montgomery march. Now 81, she says the fight for voting rights is not over, and neither is the responsibility to vote.

More than 60 years after marching for voting rights, Leatha Davis says the sacrifices of Selma still carry a warning for a generation at risk of disengaging.

More than six decades after risking her life in the fight for voting rights, 81-year-old Leatha Davis still remembers the sound of billy clubs striking peaceful demonstrators, the screams of marchers under attack, and the sacrifices that defined the Civil Rights Movement.

Today, as recent Supreme Court decisions have narrowed key protections under the Voting Rights Act and battles over congressional redistricting continue, Davis believes the struggle she joined as a teenager is far from over. But she worries the greatest threat is not only the legal battles over voting rights—it is also the growing number of people who choose not to exercise them.

“It makes me really angry when I think about we did all of that and people stay at home and don’t try to vote,” Davis said. “Every vote counts.”

For Davis, those debates are deeply personal.

She joined the movement in the days surrounding Bloody Sunday, when Alabama state troopers brutally attacked peaceful demonstrators

attempting to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma with billy clubs, tear gas, cattle prods, and attack dogs. “We thought John Lewis was dead,” Davis recalled. “They beat him to the ground. And if you ran to help him, they cracked you upside the head too. It was horrific.”

Days later, Davis marched carrying a sign reading “One Man, One Vote.” During the demonstrations, she said she was struck with a cattle prod. She later testified under her maiden name, Leatha Mae Stover, in the landmark federal case Williams v. Wallace, describing before U.S. District Judge Frank M. Johnson Jr. the violence peaceful demonstrators had endured. Johnson’s ruling allowed the Selma-to-Montgomery march to proceed.

The trauma of those days has never left her. Davis said she still has nightmares about Bloody Sunday and hopes to walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge one more time before she dies. “I’m going to walk across that bridge one day before I die,” she said.

“We were the foot soldiers,” Davis said.

“And we’ve been forgotten.”

Born into a sharecropping family in rural Alabama, Davis said she was picking cotton from sunrise to sunset by the age of five. After months of labor, her father would haul the family’s harvest to the white landowner.

“He’d tell my father he only broke even,” Davis recalled. “For all the work we did, he only gave my father three dollars and a one-gallon bucket of syrup.”

Watching her father remain trapped in poverty convinced Davis there was no future in sharecrop-



Leatha Davis

ping. But economic exploitation was only part of life under Jim Crow. Black residents were expected to lower their eyes, answer “yes sir” and “no sir,” and accept humiliation as a way of life. Refusing, Davis said, could invite violence—or worse.

Davis said the lessons that shaped her activism began even earlier, listening to her grandmother describe life just after slavery.

“My grandmother used to say she was born the third year after slavery ended,” Davis recalled. “That’s how she told her age.”

Those experiences taught her that the struggle for voting rights was never just about casting a ballot.

It was about dignity.

“When I marched,” Davis said, “I wasn’t just marching so I could vote. I was marching because I wanted to be free.”

Today, Davis worries many younger Americans have never been taught those stories or the sacrifices behind the right to vote.

“We have lost a generation of people who don’t care because they

were never told,” Davis said. “What they did to us was unspeakable. We lost some lives. It hurt.”

Voting rights advocates say Davis’ concern reflects a challenge they encounter across the country.

Eric Hall, co-founder of Black Lives Matter Birmingham and a voting rights organizer in Alabama, said many younger Black voters question whether voting still makes a difference. “We don’t have a voter registration problem,” Hall said. “We have a voter participation problem.”

Hall said many young people believe the political system no longer works for them, but organizers remind them that “the sacrifice of the people was about getting those rights. Today it’s about keeping those rights.”

Hall said organizers across Alabama are working to reconnect younger voters with the stories of civil rights foot soldiers like Davis, arguing that understanding those sacrifices is essential to protecting voting rights today.

The Rev. Dr. James M. Thomas, president of the NAACP San Fernando Valley Branch, said younger Americans often see the sacrifices of the Civil Rights Movement through a different lens.

“I don’t think they do,” Thomas said when asked whether younger generations understand what civil rights foot soldiers endured. “They’re looking at older generations and asking, ‘What have you done with the vote?’ That’s the question young people ask.”

Still, Thomas urged people not to disengage.

“Vote in the name of your ancestors,” Thomas said. “Even if you feel

like you have nobody to vote for, still vote. Someone your ancestors knew died because they wanted to give you the right to vote.”

For Davis, preserving those stories is as important as preserving the vote itself. She believes thousands of ordinary people helped build the Civil Rights Movement, even if history rarely remembers their names.

“We were the foot soldiers,” Davis said.

“And we’ve been forgotten.”

Professor Marcus Hunter, a sociologist at UCLA, said Davis’ story demonstrates why ordinary people like her remain central to understanding the Civil Rights Movement.

“History often remembers the microphone and forgets the multitude,” Hunter said. “Dr. King and John Lewis were essential leaders, but movements are built by thousands of people whose names never appear in textbooks. Preserving the stories of foot soldiers restores the true architecture of social change and reminds us that democracy is made by participation, not spectatorship.”

More than six decades after Selma, Davis remains convinced that change begins with ordinary people willing to act.

“I can’t change the world,” she said. “But I can make a difference where I stand. And I’ve done that.”

Stephen Oduntan

Stephen Oduntan is a Los Angeles-based freelance journalist whose reporting focuses on housing, homelessness, criminal justice, public policy, and issues affecting marginalized communities for @citynewsservice. His work also featured in @invisiblepeople @wave_newspapers @lafocusnewsAdvertisement

POTTER MOTIVATION

Made for More

By Rusty Potter

Have you ever felt there must be more to life than what you are currently experiencing? More purpose. More growth. More opportunity. I believe that feeling is often a reminder that we were made for more.

Many people spend their lives simply surviving. They wake up, go through the same routines, complain about problems, and convince themselves that this is all life has to offer. But somewhere deep inside, they know there is something greater.

A bird was made to fly. A fish

was made to swim. A seed was made to grow. Likewise, every one of us was created with gifts, abilities, and potential. The tragedy is not that some people lack potential. The tragedy is that some people never discover or develop what is already inside of them.

You may have come from a small town, a poor family, or a difficult childhood. You may have made mistakes that you wish you could erase. Perhaps someone told you that you would never amount to anything.

Don’t believe them.

Your past may explain where you have been, but it does not have to determine where you are going.



Rusty Potter

Comfort can be dangerous because eventually we can mistake being comfortable for being successful. We stop learning. We stop trying new things. We settle

into a routine and call it life.

But there is more.

More books to write. More goals to accomplish. More people to encourage. More places to see. More knowledge to gain. More of your potential waiting to be discovered.

That does not mean you have to become famous or wealthy. Being made more means becoming the best version of yourself. It means refusing to die with unused gifts still inside you.

The Bible reminds us in Ephesians 3: 20 that God can do “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” Sometimes our biggest limitation is not our circumstance. Sometimes it is the

small way we think about ourselves.

Dream again. Set another goal. Take the class. Write the book. Start the business. Go back to school. Try again.

Don’t let fear convince you to stay where you are simply because it feels familiar.

You have survived too much, learned too much, and come too far to settle now.

There is another level waiting for you.

Never forget:

You were not made to exist. You were made to grow, to contribute, to inspire, and to become more.

You were made for more.

The Cruelty Is the Problem, America Is Better Than This

By Prentiss Smith

Over the last decade, I have seen a lot of change happening in America, and not necessarily for the best. In fact, I believe there is a reckoning coming. Not a political reckoning. Not an electoral reckoning. A moral reckoning.

And no, I am not a preacher or a religious person, but I am someone who knows the difference between right and wrong and good and evil. Sadly, what I see today in America is cruel and inhumane, and it is un-American.

History has a long memory, and it rarely treats cruelty kindly. Today, in the name of immigration enforcement, America is witnessing the expansion of detention facilities, mass deportation operations, family separations, and policies designed to make life so difficult that people simply give up and leave.

Supporters argue these measures are necessary to secure the border and restore order to an immigration system that has been neglected for decades. Reasonable people can debate immigra-

tion policy. Nations have a right to secure their borders. They have a responsibility to know who enters and who remains within them.

But there is a profound difference between enforcing laws and abandoning our humanity. The measure of a nation is not how it treats the powerful. It is how it treats the vulnerable.

History repeatedly teaches the same lesson. During moments of fear, governments often justify extraordinary measures. Leaders insist the threat is urgent, the circumstances exceptional, and the suffering necessary.

Critics are dismissed as naïve. I have seen compassion portrayed as weakness by people who are supposed to be compassionate by definition—evangelical Christians. It’s hard to reconcile the contradictions, but it is real.

And years later, when the passions of the moment have faded, societies look back and ask a simple question: Was this who we wanted to be? The answer is often uncomfortable.

Future generations will not only examine statistics and policy pa-



Prentiss Smith

pers. They will examine photographs.

They will examine testimonies. They will examine the stories of children who watched parents disappear into detention systems. They will examine communities living in fear. They will examine whether America responded to a difficult challenge with wisdom and fairness—or with punishment and humiliation.

The architects of these policies, along with those who defended them, enabled them, or looked away from their consequences, may

believe history will vindicate them. History may have other plans.

I have lived long enough to know that every generation faces a test. Ours is whether we can address immigration without surrendering the values that define us. Whether we can enforce laws without celebrating suffering. Whether we can maintain security without sacrificing dignity.

Cruelty is often politically profitable in the short term. It creates villains. It energizes crowds. It turns human beings into symbols and slogans. But cruelty has never built a stronger nation. And I don’t believe it is building a stronger nation today.

Cruelty corrodes institutions. It hardens hearts. It teaches citizens to view fellow human beings as less deserving of compassion and justice. Most importantly, it leaves scars that endure long after the political victories have been forgotten.

We are still living with the scars of slavery and Jim Crow.

The great irony is that the strongest societies are not those that show the least mercy. They are the ones confident enough to uphold their principles even during mo-

ments of uncertainty and fear.

America’s story has never been perfect. It is a story filled with contradictions, failures, and painful chapters. Yet progress has often come when courageous people were willing to challenge policies rooted in exclusion, discrimination, and dehumanization.

The question facing us today is not simply what kind of immigration system we want. The deeper question is what kind of people we want to be. Because one day, the speeches will be forgotten. The campaign slogans will disappear.

The political arguments will fade. History’s verdict is often delayed, but it is rarely denied. And when it arrives, it is seldom kind to those who confused cruelty with courage.

What will remain is the historical record. And history, more often than not, reserves its harshest judgment for those who mistook cruelty for strength.

Today, I see cruelty, I don’t see strength. We are a weaker nation today than we have ever been in my lifetime. And that’s my take. smithpren@aol.com

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NEWS

Built for a Moment Like This: The Divine Nine and the Fight After Louisiana v. Callais

(BPUSA) For more than a century, the historically Black fraternities and sororities collectively known as the Divine Nine have helped educate voters, develop leaders and mobilize Black communities.

Now, following a major U.S. Supreme Court ruling involving Louisiana's congressional map, that tradition of civic engagement is again taking center stage.

The message was on display in Las Vegas during the week of July 18, when nearly 27,000 members and families of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated gathered for the organization's biennial Boule.

Although it was an AKA convention, the political leaders participating represented the broader reach of the Divine Nine.

Congresswoman Lauren Underwood moderated a conversation with attorney and political commentator Bakari Sellers during a workshop titled "Soaring to the Polls: Mastering the Midterm Journey." Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford addressed participants, Congresswoman Emilia Sykes attended, and Maryland Gov. Wes Moore received a community award and delivered remarks during the sorority's public meeting.

All are members of historically Black Greek-letter organizations.

The gathering highlighted

ed the continuing influence of the Divine Nine at a time when voting rights and Black representation in Congress are again subjects of national debate.

The nine organizations — Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity — have long emphasized service, education, leadership and civic participation.

Although nonpartisan, the organizations and their members have historically participated in voter registration, voter education, policy discussions and get-out-the-vote efforts.

Underwood, a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, described that distinction from the stage.

"We are not telling them who to vote for, but as we soar to the polls, we have a lot of ground to cover to lay the foundation for what issues are on the ballot, who's running, how to participate in this election."

That work has deep historical roots.

W.E.B. Du Bois, a member of Alpha Phi Alpha, helped found the NAACP. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was also an Alpha. Across generations, members of Divine Nine organi-



Political Commentator Bakari Sellers and Congresswoman Lauren Underwood

zations have served as civil rights organizers, attorneys, educators, elected officials and community leaders.

The urgency surrounding that work has increased following the Supreme Court's April ruling in Louisiana v. Callais.

The case centered on Louisiana's congressional map and its creation of a second majority-Black congressional district. The Supreme Court ruled that Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act did not require Louisiana to create the additional majority-minority district and held that the state's use of race in drawing the district violated the Constitution.

The decision has intensified debate over the future

application of Section 2 and minority representation in Congress.

For the Divine Nine, the debate connects directly to a history that predates the Voting Rights Act itself.

Gov. Moore, a member of Alpha Phi Alpha, reminded the audience that Black Greek-letter organizations emerged during difficult periods in American history.

"When there's ever a question about whether the AKAs are built for a moment like this, let's be clear: the AKAs were built in a moment like this," Moore said.

His observation reflects the broader history of the Divine Nine.

Alpha Phi Alpha, the oldest of the organizations, was

founded in 1906, followed by Alpha Kappa Alpha in 1908. Over the decades, the organizations became networks through which Black professionals, educators, clergy, businesspeople and activists could organize, mentor and serve their communities.

Sellers told the audience that Black political representation could face significant changes as congressional districts are challenged and redrawn.

"In Alabama, in Mississippi, in Georgia, in Arkansas, in Texas, and in Florida, we had Black elected officials because we could go out and vote for people who we believed shared our same lived experiences and that represented our interests," Sellers said.

He connected today's challenges to an earlier generation of activism. His father, Cleveland Sellers, was a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during the Civil Rights Movement.

"When my dad and Stokely and everybody were going around yelling Black Power, they weren't trying to shoot you," Sellers said. "They were talking about Black economic power and Black political power."

Underwood emphasized voter education and encouraged members to reach voters online with information about issues affecting their everyday lives, includ-

ing housing and health care costs.

Sellers similarly stressed connecting political issues to their impact on communities, pointing to rural hospital closures as an example. Losing a hospital, he noted, can mean losing both access to health care and one of a rural community's largest employers.

The larger message coming from Las Vegas extended well beyond one sorority convention.

The Divine Nine have endured through dramatic changes in America's political and social landscape while maintaining traditions of service, leadership and civic participation.

Sellers challenged those gathered to carry the message back to their communities.

"I'm talking to you all as apostles," he said. "I'm not trying to teach you something, I'm trying to give you something to go out and share."

That assignment extends across the Divine Nine.

As another national debate unfolds over voting rights and Black political representation, history shows these organizations have faced challenging moments before — and have long relied on education, organization and civic engagement as their response.

(Based on article written by Danielle Bess)

The Reverse Great Migration For African Americans is Happening Now!

By Stephanie Heron

BPUSA — The reverse Great Migration is the ongoing movement of many Black Americans from Northern, Midwestern, and Western states back to the South. This started in the late 20th century and is continuing today. Black Americans moved during the Great Migration because they wanted to escape segregation and find industrial work, but today's movement is for different reasons. It reflects a broader mix of economic, social, and cultural factors.

The reverse Great Migration is the influx of Black Americans moving back to the South from Northern, Midwestern, and Western states. It's happening because Southern economies are appealing and the cost of living is lower.

According to the Pew Research Center, the USA's Black population has grown from 36.2 million in 2000 to 49.2 million in 2024. What's interesting is that the numbers have increased fastest in states that historically have not had many Black residents.

Another surprising thing is that there's the reverse Great Migration. Migration patterns are changing for Black Americans, and this is why.

What Is the Reverse Migration of African Americans?

The reverse Great Migration is the ongoing movement of many Black Americans from Northern, Midwestern, and Western states back to the South. This started in the late 20th century and is continuing today.

Black Americans moved during the Great Migration because they wanted to es-

cape segregation and find industrial work, but today's movement is for different reasons. It reflects a broader mix of economic, social, and cultural factors.

Many people are relocating to metropolitan areas with expanding industries, diverse employment opportunities, and growing Black middle-class communities. This trend is a demographic shift that's reshaping where Black Americans live, work, and build wealth, while also influencing political representation, housing markets, and regional economic growth.

Why Is Reverse Migration Happening?

Black Americans are moving to the South because of several factors. The first is that many Northern and Midwestern cities experienced manufacturing declines and slower job growth after the late 20th century, while Southern metropolitan areas attracted businesses in healthcare, technology, logistics, finance, and professional services.

Housing affordability has also played an important role, with many Southern cities offering lower home prices and living costs than places like New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles. Many people take advantage of a nationwide moving network as part of their relocation planning to cut down on costs and save up for their dream homes in the South.

Other factors that further influence relocation decisions include:

- Climate preferences
- Retirement
- Opportunity to live closer to extended family
- Improved civil rights protections compared with the early 20th century have also



made many Southern communities more attractive than they were during the original Great Migration.

How Reverse Migration Is Changing Southern Communities

The return of Black Americans has contributed to significant changes across many Southern cities and suburbs. Growing populations have supported the expansion of Black-owned businesses, as well as professional organizations, cultural institutions, and civic leadership.

Many metropolitan areas have seen increased demand for housing, schools, and public infrastructure as populations grow. Reverse migration has also strengthened political influence in some regions, and this affects local elections and community advocacy.

At the same time, rapid growth has introduced new challenges. They include:

- Rising housing costs
- Suburban expansion
- Concerns about displace-

ment in some neighborhoods

The trend demonstrates that migration isn't simply about changing addresses; it also shapes local economies, cultural life, entrepreneurship, and long-term community development.

How Reverse Migration Is Influencing Black Wealth and Homeownership

One of the less-discussed effects of reverse migration is its connection to wealth building and homeownership. Several Southern metropolitan areas have historically offered lower entry prices for housing than major Northern coastal cities, and this allows some families to purchase homes earlier or buy larger properties.

For households moving from high-cost regions, selling a home or relocating with accumulated savings can provide additional financial flexibility. This has contributed to a growth in Black homeownership in certain Southern suburbs and emerging metropolitan

corridors.

This may also support intergenerational wealth transfer, as property ownership can create assets that are passed to children and grandchildren.

The outcome isn't uniform everywhere, though. Rising demand in some fast-growing cities has led to increasing home prices, making affordability a continuing challenge for many new residents.

Where Are Black People Moving To?

Many Black Americans are migrating to:

- Atlanta, Houston, Dallas, Charlotte, Raleigh, Nashville, Orlando, Washington, DC

This is because there are expanding job markets, as well as relatively lower housing costs than in several coastal cities. Plus, there are growing Black professional communities in these areas.

Why Did African Americans Move to the North?

African Americans moved

to the North during the Great Migration for a combination of economic opportunity and personal safety. Northern factories needed workers, especially during WWI and WWII, and many employers actively recruited Southern Black laborers.

Many families also wanted to escape Jim Crow segregation, as well as racial violence, voter suppression, and limited educational opportunities. In addition, moving north offered the possibility of:

- Better wages
- Greater political participation
- Access to expanding urban communities

Why Did So Many Black People Stay in the South?

Family ties were one of the strongest reasons why so many Black people stayed in the South. Many people chose to stay close to relatives, community networks, churches, and land that had been in their families for generations.

Some Black farmers and business owners had established livelihoods they didn't want to abandon, while others lacked the financial resources needed to relocate.

Over time, legal segregation ended, educational opportunities expanded, and Southern cities developed stronger communities. This made remaining in the region a more attractive option.

Reverse Great Migration Is Driving Black Americans Back to Familiar Places

A reverse Great Migration is happening, and it's creating some major shifts in many areas. Not only is it changing demographics, but it's also shaping new political and economic trends.

THANK YOU!

The family of Mrs. Ruby Lee Weekly Billups gratefully acknowledges every act of kindness and expression of love shown during our time of bereavement. Thank you so much for all of your prayers and support.

With love and appreciation,
The Billups Family





COMMUNITY

The City of Grambling and Black Men In Purple present “Let’s Talk About It” Session

By Joice M. Dunn

The City of Grambling officials and Black Men In Purple are collectively holding a “Let’s Talk About It” session Saturday, September 19, from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. in the Grambling City Park. The theme is “No More Working in Silos — Let’s Align Our Efforts, Amplify Our Impact, and Move Grambling Forward Together.” “Absolutely, this is a must attend event because for far too long many different organizations have been trying to achieve the same goal through separate paths. This is an opportunity to bring all that energy under one

roof because the latter has not worked effectively,” explained Gregory Ludley, executive director of Black Men in Purple. The partnership is supported by the HBCU Boosters as Title Sponsor. One Community, One Conversation and One Collective Effort. The gathering will be community-wide designed to bring organizations, leaders, businesses, educators, churches, Greek-letter organizations, nonprofits, youth groups, and residents together to share ideas, connect resources, identify common goals, and develop collaborative solutions for Grambling.



Gregory Ludley

There will be a community update by Mayor Alvin Bradley — accomplishments, initiatives, challenges, and future priorities during his current tenure. There will be presentations by candidates and elected officials in attendance who will have an

opportunity to introduce themselves and discuss their priorities and platforms. Ludley said that every local candidate will receive a personal invitation from him. There’re several sessions included in the event to involve all area residents. Economic development: How to build a stronger local economy? Local business development, entrepreneurship, jobs, workforce opportunities, investment, and community partnerships. An educational enhancement and youth session will be included in preparing the young people for the future through mentoring, scholarships, HBCU opportunities, career preparation, youth

leadership, and education partnerships. Political and Civic Education: “Know Before You Vote.” Local, state and federal offices; candidates and platforms; voting records where applicable; issues affecting the community; voter participation and civic engagement. There will be several question opportunities for residents and participate in a moderate community discussion. There will be a Community Action Agenda to identify priority issues and begin developing a “We Are Grambling” and a Community Action Agenda for future collaboration. A free community lunch will be provided. Enjoy

food, fellowship, networking, and opportunities to connect with organizations and community partners. Voter registration and resources will be available: registration and nonpartisan civic information will be available throughout the event, along with community organization and resource tables. All are welcome to attend, from Civic Organizations, Churches, Fraternities, Sororities, Nonprofits, Businesses, Educators, Youth Organizations, and Community Groups, to Elected Officials. Candidates and Residents. One Conversation. One Collective Effort, Let’s Talk About It and then Let’s Do Something About It.

Candidates Meet & Greet Held at Lincoln Prep

By Lena W. Claybon

A Candidate’s Meet & Greet was held on Thursday, August 27, 2026 where the community was able to hear from local candidates running for office to hear about their backgrounds and their plans for office if they were to be elected. The forum was hosted by the Ruston Voter’s League and partners which included The Pinkie C. Wilkerson Foundation, the Louisiana Delta Chapter of Jack and Jill, The Delta Sigma Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and the GSU Inspiring Educator’s Club. Each candidate was given two minutes to introduce

themselves and talk about their platforms. Prior to the speeches by the Candidates, the host organizations took turns explaining each position and what that position was responsible for. Candidates on hand were: Mayoral Candidates: Alvin Bradley (Grambling), Edward Jones (Grambling), Ronny Walker (Ruston) and William Falkner (Ruston) City Council Candidates: John Brown, Mary Gipson, Davaria Ponton, Delores Smith, Jerry Lewis, Cathy Giles, David Ferguson and Garnett Wagner Police Juror Candidates: Troy Brooks, Zakeisha R. Evans School Board Candidates: Richard Anderson, Greta



School Board Candidates Address Community

Carter, Evelyn Lewis Cooper, Aimee Blackman, Sandra Woods, Marsha Davis District Judge Candidates: Lewis Jones, Phillip Ellis City Judge Candidates: Gina Jones, Add Goff

U.S. House of Representative Candidate: Antonio Wilson Upcoming candidate forums for the 2026 Lincoln Parish elections are scheduled throughout September and October 2026, hosted

by organizations like and the Ruston Daily Leader. Schedule and Locations • September 21, 2026 (6:00 PM): Hosted by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. at the Grambling State University – Nursing Building. • September 22, 2026 (6:00 PM): Mayoral Candidates (Choudrant, Dubach, Grambling, and Ruston) at the Lincoln Parish Library Events Center. • September 29, 2026 (6:00 PM): Judicial Candidates (3rd Judicial District Judge Division B, and Ruston City Court Judge) at the Lincoln Parish Library Events Center. • October 1, 2026 (6:00 PM): Parish & School

Board Candidates (Lincoln Parish Police Jury District 9; School Board Districts 2, 11, and 12) at the Lincoln Parish Library Events Center. • October 6, 2026 (6:00 PM): Municipal Candidates (Grambling City Council and Ruston Aldermen) at the Lincoln Parish Library Events Center. **Event Details** • Time: Doors open at 5:30 PM for a Meet & Greet; forums begin at 6:00 PM. • Cost: Free and open to the public. • Format: Attendees can submit questions for the candidates to answer.

Announcements

Line Dance class open to 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, September 14. For more information, please contact Collins at 832 891-7488.

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 Executive Committee meeting at 5:30 p.m. and regular monthly meetings at 6 p.m. by teleconference on the 3rd Thursdays of the month. The next meeting is scheduled for September 17.

Hands Up organization to sponsor Food Fest

The 22 Hands Up Organization, led by Darrell Hampton, will hold a Food Fest on Saturday, Sept. 26, at the Community House, 711 Gladney Street, in Minden from noon until 3 p.m. Because of donors and community partners, the 22 Hands Up Organization continues to create opportunities, experiences, and positive connections for young people and families, using as a moto: Together, We Raise the Next Generation! There will be fun and eating for everyone during the organization’s main fund raiser activity.

The IH2H-DREXX LIVES Foundation hosts weekly Grief Support Circle

The IH2H-DREXX LIVES Foundation hosts a Grief Support Circle every other Monday at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom, giving people who have experienced loss a place to share, connect and receive support. The meeting is free to join. For information about the Support Circle, contact Nekedra Houston or Daezia Hunter at drexllivesnonprofit@gmail.com

Master Gardeners offers

11-week training course

The North Central Louisiana Master Gardeners now holds an 11-week summer course. The course began on June 30 and runs through September. The second 11-week course will offer participants a certificate during a September graduation ceremony. Those graduating from the course will join the local Master Gardeners for future community involvement. For additional information contact K. Bass at 318- 251-5134 or email her at kyleighbass@agcenter.lsu.edu.

Grambling Water Department sends wanting to Citizens

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 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.

Sign Up Now for free CivicReady

The Civic Ready Messaging System is a mass notification system built for government communications. This is a free service for our citizens. Please sign up so you can be notified of city-wide alerts and emergency notifications. Sign up by going to City of Grambling website (www.cityofgrambling.org) and clicking on CivicReady.

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 can grant volunteers hours and service-learning hours. Volunteers may contact Ponton at 318 278-9892.

The North Louisiana Autism organization offers support

The Autism Society of North Louisiana is a non-profit organization that provides support, resources, advocacy, and community programs for autistic individuals and their families while promoting autism acceptance and inclusion throughout North Louisiana. For more information or to connect with the organization, please contact us at autismnorthla@gmail.com

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 cancel-

lations must be made two hours prior to pick-up time. For additional information

please contact Samantha Dimmer, transportation coordinator 318-251 5138.



Save The Date

For a fundraising event for
PHILLIP ELLIS
candidate for Third Judicial District Court Judge

Tuesday, September 22, 2026
5:30 - 7:30 PM

The Big House
504 North Vienna Street
Ruston, LA 71270

Please join us for an evening in support of Phillip Ellis for District Judge. Phillip’s deep roots in our communities and broad experience across the justice system have prepared him to serve with fairness, integrity, and sound judgment as our next District Judge.

If we can include your name on our list as a supporter/sponsor of the event, please reply to votephillipellis@gmail.com.

Invitation to follow.



THE GRAMBLING ★ CONNECTION

The Grambling Connection Is On Sale Now in Stores

Where To Find Us

Rogers Mini Mart (Grambling, LA)

Realitees (Grambling, LA)

Superior Mart - Exxon Station (Grambling, LA)

Superior Mart - Hwy 80 (Grambling, LA)

Hill's Grocery Store (Grambling, LA)

Shell Station (Arcadia)

(We will continue to add locations monthly)

OR SUBSCRIBE



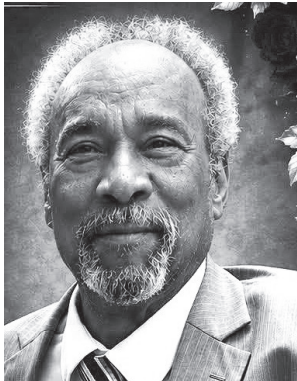
www.gramblingconnection.com/subscribe



CHURCH NEWS

In Remembrance

Life and Legacy of Charles Henry Owens III



Charles Henry Owens III

Charles Henry Owens III was born June 27, 1944, in Monroe, Louisiana, to the late Charles Henry Owens Jr. and Eula Mae Younger Owens. The eldest of six children, he peacefully departed this life on August 10.

A graduate of Grambling Laboratory High School and Grambling State University, Charles

married his lifelong love, Delores Steverson, in September 1962. They shared nearly 64 years together and raised three children: Cassandra, Charlene, and Charles IV.

He served honorably in the United States Army during the Viet Nam era and devoted more than 40 years in education as a teacher, coach, assistant principal, and direc-

tor of Auxiliary Affairs in the Bienville and Lincoln Parish School boards, touching countless lives through his wisdom, fairness, and leadership.

He was preceded in death by his parents and sister, Previa Owens. He leaves to cherish his memory his devoted wife, Delores S. Owens; children, Cassandra Sherrard (Aurturo), Charlene Wyatt

(Rick), and Charles Owens IV (Courtne); sisters, Lana Owens Simpson and Veronica Owens; brothers, Reginald Owens (Wanda) and Don Owens (Gloria).

His legacy continues through seven grandchildren—Charles Owens, V. Brandon Sherrard, Ashley Sherrard Jones, Alexis Wyatt Meeks (Nathan), Brianna Wyatt, Talyah Lewis, and Charisma Owens

Murray (Rosevelt)—and five great-grandchildren: Imani Sherrard, Noelle Jones, Amelia Meeks, Arthur Meeks and Solace Murray.

Charles also leaves many nieces, nephews, relatives, friends, former students, and colleagues. His legacy of love, strength, service, and devotion to family and education will live on forever.

Church Announcements

Church to celebrate pastor and wife ninth appreciation

The China Grove Baptist Church will hold its pastor's and wife ninth appreciation service Sunday, September 13 at 2:30 p.m. The church is located on 406 Vernon St. Ruston and pastored by Reverend Damian Wilson.

Reverend Brian Reed and the New Tabernacle church family of Monroe will serve as special guest. The theme: Feeding God's People With Truth, Jeremiah 3:15.

All area churches are invited to join in the service.

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 next meeting will be held on Monday, September 14. The meeting is spearheaded by Patrick Jefferson, former state representative, along with invited speakers. Every man is invited to come and worship.

Love Chapel Church to celebrate Family and Friends Day

The Love Chapel Baptist Church Family will hold a Family and Friends Pack A Pew Program in honor of Beloved Zelda Thompson Sunday, September 27 at 2:30 p.m. The guest Pastor and church will be Rev. James Maddox

of Union Baptist Church, Dubach. The church is located on 1525 Sikes Street in Ruston and pastored by Rev. Elliott Abney.

Lewis Temple CME Church Food Distribution

Lewis Temple CME Church on 301 Main Street in Grambling distributes free bags of food every third Monday of the month from 1-3 p.m. To qualify you need identification and a utility bill. You must live in the Grambling or Simsboro area.

For more information, please call Liz White at 318-299-7509.

China Grove Church opens 'China Closet'

The China Grove Baptist Church will open the 'China

Closet' to the public each Friday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the church on 407 Vernon St., Ruston.

The Closet will be open to anyone in need of clothing or assistance. It is under the supervision of the matrons/mision department of the church.

For additional information contact Evangelist Annie Wilson at 318-570-9134 or call Tonika Blake at 318-243-3295. The church is pastored by Rev. Damian E. Wilson, Sr.

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 chan-

nel, 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 ChurchofChristatGrambling@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 Farmer-ville 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 Vi-

enna 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. ruston-churchofchrist.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. lifepoint-truston.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



COMMUNITY (CONT'D)

Argusta Wilson Celebrates Eighty-Two with Birthday Surprise

By Joice M. Dunn

It seemed like an ordinary Sunday at China Grove Baptist Church, located on 406 Vernon Street in Ruston, but it turned out to be a special 82nd birthday surprise for Argusta Wilson. To celebrate this wonderful milestone, her family (children and grandchildren) surprised her with a special birthday dinner on Sunday, August 23, after church services. (China Grove Church under the leadership of Pastor Damian Wilson). The celebration was shared with loved ones and friends who gathered to honor and celebrate her life. “I was so surprised, they really shocked me. They got me good,” Wilson said with a beautiful smile. Argusta Wilson was born on August 24, 1944, to the late Joe Ben Wilson Sr. and late Cora Lee Mays Wilson. She is the 9th child of 12 and the youngest girl. Argusta has five children

-Demetra Davis, Tonika Blake (Fred), Ivan, Danette and Kwanza Wilson- she has eight grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren. Joining in the surprise were her classmates of Lincoln High School from 1963, Barbara Manning and Bettye Smith Dunn. “Argusta has always been nice and sweet person. We have supported each other since our high school days. What you see, is what you get and she has been that way as far as I can remember,” said Dunn. “She taught me how to read and when I went to first grade, I was already ready. She would always make me a cake for my birthday. I was the youngest in the family, but she was the youngest girl. I can remember that Argusta was always easy going,” said her brother, Joe Wilson. Wilson dedicated 33 years of service to the Lincoln Parish School Board, (Special Education Department), leaving a lasting



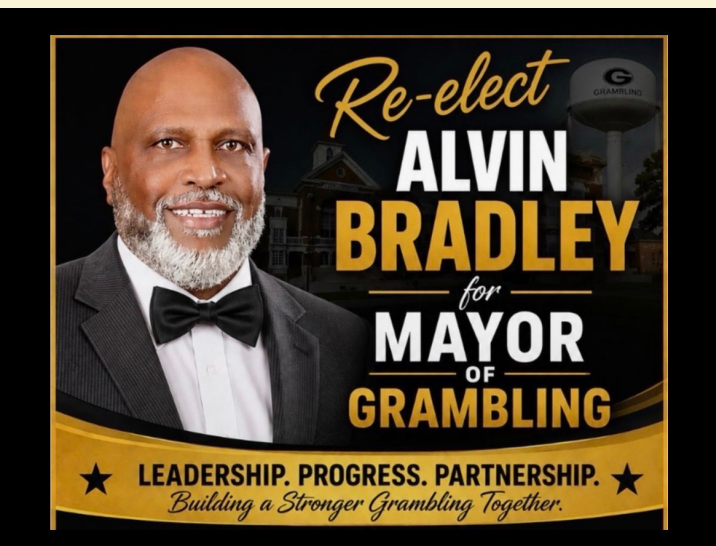
Argusta Wilson celebrates her surprise birthday lunch with friends and family.

impact through her years of hard work and commitment. The day was filled with celebrations of 82 beautiful years of life, love, memories, family, friendship, and service.

CANDIDATE’S PROFILE: Delivering Leadership, Progress and Partnership

Dear Citizens of Grambling: When I first asked for the opportunity to serve as your mayor, I understood that progress would not come through one person alone. Progress comes when a city chooses to work together, when leaders listen, when citizens stay engaged, and when partnerships are built on trust, respect, and a shared love for community. Over the course of this administration, which is exactly what we have worked to do. Together, we have made meaningful progress. We have strengthened city operations, improved public safety, reopened and reenergized the Community Center, advanced infrastructure projects, repaired streets, invested in water and sewer improvements, supported beautification efforts, and worked to position Grambling for responsible economic growth. These accomplishments did not happen by chance. They happened because this team remained focused, steady, and committed to doing the work.

One of the greatest strengths of this administration has been my ability to build relationships. I have worked to strengthen partnerships with our churches, neighboring communities of Ruston, Mt. Olive and Simsboro, Grambling State University, the Greater Grambling Chamber of Commerce, civic organizations, community leaders, and local businesses. These partnerships matter because they bring people to the same table. They allow us to share resources, solve problems together, support our youth and seniors, promote safety, encourage economic development, and create opportunities that no single office could accomplish alone. Our churches have long been the spiritual and service backbone of this community. They help us reach families, care for those in need, and bring people together around hope and purpose. Our university is more than an institution; it is part of Grambling’s identity, our economy, and our future. The Chamber of Commerce has re-



gaged to help us support business growth, attract investment, and encourage entrepreneurship. Civic organizations, fraternities, sororities, alumni groups, volunteers, and neighborhood leaders help turn ideas into action. Relationship building creates a stronger community because it builds trust, expands participation, and reminds every citizen that they have a role in Grambling’s future. We know there is still work to do. Some projects have been started and must be completed. Some plans have been laid and must be carried forward. Infrastructure improvements, parks and recreation expansion, eco-

nomic development, neighborhood lighting, transportation access, housing growth, and continued support for our families all require experience, consistency, and follow-through. This is not the time to stop the progress. This is the time to finish what we started. I am asking the voters of Grambling to Re-Elect Alvin Bradley #86 as Mayor of Grambling to continue the work, complete the projects already in motion, and keep building the partnerships that move our city forward. I have proven that when we work together, Grambling can grow stronger, safer, cleaner, and more connected. With your support, I will continue to build on the progress we have made, honor the foundation that has been laid, and complete the work that will benefit our children, our seniors, our businesses, our university, and every neighborhood in our city. May God continue to bless the City of Grambling, and may we continue moving forward together.

Louisiana’s From Page 1

Only Louisiana Healthcare Connections, with 364,000 people, has more participants, according to a state health department report from July. In a news release, the health department said Medicaid recipients who have to

switch plans will receive a letter by Oct. 1 with instructions on how to do so. An enrollment period to enter a new plan will be open for them from Oct. 15 to Nov. 16. This is the second health care company to pull out of Louisiana’s Medicaid program this year. UnitedHealthcare left Louisiana’s Medicaid pro-

gram in the spring following a legal dispute with Attorney General Liz Murrill over its parent company’s pharmacy benefits manager. Sen. Patrick McMath, R-Covington, who is chair of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee, said four Medicaid plans will probably work better for a state the size of Louisi-

ana. Doctors, nurse practitioners and other health-care providers faced a lot of paperwork and other administrative tasks trying to manage six plans for Medicaid recipients, he said. “I think four is a more adequate number,” McMath said in an interview Tuesday. Representatives with

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana could not immediately be reached for comment late Tuesday. Since the beginning of 2024, when Gov. Jeff Landry took office, enrollment in Louisiana’s Medicaid program has dropped dramatically. Six privately run Medicaid plans covered more than 1.6 million people at the time.

The five remaining plans serve around 1.2 million people, according to state health department reports. Landry has been aggressive about screening Medicaid recipients for eligibility, but critics worry those tests sometimes result in people who still qualify for benefits being kicked out of the program.

9 Justices From Page 1

Other high-profile Democrats have said in recent weeks and months they want to see change at the Supreme Court, including House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., Sen. Raphael Warnock, D-Ga., Sen. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., and Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro. As for public opinion, Pew Research found that just over half of Americans have an unfavorable view of the Supreme Court, according to survey results published July 30, a near historic low. A Gallup poll published July 28 found confidence in the Supreme Court at a record low of 33%. While many Democrats’ answer to the dissatisfaction is to add more justices, the House Republican resolution proposed a constitutional amendment that would codify the number of justices at nine. The resolution would also have to pass the Senate to

begin the seven-year clock for three-fifths of states, or 38, to ratify it. House Speaker Mike Johnson at a Tuesday press conference accused the Democratic Socialists of America, whom he referred to as the “communist socialists in the Democrat party who are taking the party over,” of wanting “to pack the U.S. Supreme Court.” “We’re gonna make sure that doesn’t happen,” the Louisiana Republican said. His office did not respond to a States Newsroom request for comment on whether he believes the resolution would succeed or if leadership has put the bill on the floor calendar to send a message ahead of the November midterm elections in which control of the House is at stake. Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Ariz., introduced the resolution in January 2025. The resolution was referred to the House calendar on July 6 of this year. Biggs won the GOP primary for Arizona governor in July. Biggs argued in early June

that his resolution would protect the court from people “threatening to pack this iconic American institution to ensure favorable outcomes for their causes.” “This action will protect the Court’s legitimacy, preserve the checks and balances that safeguard our cherished freedoms, and ensure every American’s rights remain secure – no matter who holds political power,” he said in a statement after the House Committee on the Judiciary advanced the legislation. Not all think that expanding the Supreme Court or restricting its size to nine justices will fix what many see as serious flaws. Gabe Roth, executive director of the nonprofit Fix the Court, said both ideas are “pretty cynical positions.” “I think it just is part of this magical thinking that all of a sudden we’re going to have 13 justices and everything is going to be okay in the federal judiciary. That voting rights will come back, abortion rights will come

back, and that’s not how cases reach the court,” said Roth, whose organization advocates for “non-ideological fixes.” On the “keep nine” side, Roth said there’s a belief that the court now has a “perfect construct.” “It’s not,” he said, adding “I don’t see why keep nine is a good idea other than to try to rile up the base.” Instead Roth wants to see term limits gradually phased in over time. “Every democracy that’s younger than ours has term limits or age limits for their apex court justices. Forty-nine out of 50 states have term limits, age limits, or retention elections for their apex courts,” he told States Newsroom in an interview last Tuesday. The Supreme Court lacks term limits “because King George was firing colonial judges, and so some monarch’s mental decrepitude shouldn’t be a reason for maintaining something 250 years later,” Roth said, referring to Great Britain’s King George III at-will firing of

judges in the colonies. Founders of the United States wrote into the Constitution several guardrails against influencing the court, including giving judges lifetime appointments, according to the American Bar Association. Roth supports legislation introduced last year by Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., that would limit a justice’s Supreme Court service to 18 years, and would give each president a chance to nominate one justice during their first and third years in office. That means the number of justices could fluctuate at times, depending on retirements or deaths. “It’s basically like you add a new justice every two years, and you know, if there are 10 or 11 justices for 10 or 15 years, so be it,” he said. Democrats “came to the number four because that would give Democrats a 7-6 majority. It’s not like they’re pulling four out of thin air,” he said, referring to advocates who want 13 justices. The system would be

“fair” and “regularized,” Roth added. “So we don’t have a system where Trump gets three (nominations) in one term, and then Jimmy Carter got zero in his one term.” Eight cosponsors, all Democrats, joined Khanna’s legislation. They include Reps. Don Beyer, D-Va., Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich, Sean Casten, D-Ill., Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., Daniel Goldman, D-N.Y., Juan Vargas, D-Calif., Summer Lee, D-Pa., and Yassamin Ansari, D-Ariz. Both Rep. Hank Johnson, D-Ga., and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., have sponsored other legislation to create term limits for Supreme Court justices. Johnson’s bill, first introduced in 2023, has 86 Democratic cosponsors. Sens. Cory Booker, D-N.J., Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and Alex Padilla, D-Calif., joined Whitehouse to reintroduce their term limits bill in July. Jennifer Shutt (La Illuminator) contributed to this report.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

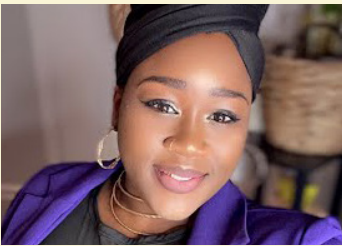
CHARMING’S CORNER

When God Goes Beyond Your Bucket List

By Charming Davis

Have you ever looked around at your life and realized that God didn’t just answer your prayers, He exceeded them? Not just one prayer. Not just one dream. But somehow, little by little, the things you once wrote on vision boards, whispered during prayer, talked about with friends, or quietly hoped would happen “one day” started becoming your actual life. And then God kept going. There is a beautiful place in our spiritual journey where we stop simply asking God to give us the life we planned and start trusting Him enough to lead us into the life He planned. The Bible says in Ephesians 3:20 that God is able to do “infinitely more than we might ask or think.” But what does it take to

experience that? For me, I believe a huge part of it is surrender. We often think faith means believing really hard for what we want. Sometimes faith is actually having enough trust to release what we want and say, “God, if You have something better, I’m willing to follow You there.” That sounds beautiful until the “there” requires leaving something comfortable. Sometimes expansion looks like an ending first. Sometimes God will interrupt a plan, close a door, change your environment, separate you from what you thought you needed, or send you somewhere you never pictured yourself going. And while you are standing there wondering, “God, what are You doing?” He may be rearranging your life around prayers you forgot you prayed.



Charming Davis

I have learned that the bucket list is limited by what we can imagine from where we are standing. God can see around corners we cannot. We may ask for a job, while God sees leadership. We may ask for financial stability, while God sees purpose and multiple streams of provision. We may ask to help people, while God sees a ministry, a business, a testimony, and lives touched in places we haven’t even visited yet.

So how do we reach that place? I don’t believe there is a magic formula for getting God to bless us. But I do believe there is a posture that allows us to recognize and walk into what He is doing: pray, listen, move, surrender, and remain grateful. Stop requiring every instruction from God to make sense before you obey it. Pay attention to the doors opening naturally. Pay attention to what keeps returning to your spirit. Pay attention when your plans are interrupted. And most importantly, stay close enough to God that you can recognize His voice even when His answer looks completely different from your request. At some point, you may discover something incredible: You don’t even have a bucket list anymore. Not because you stopped dreaming, but because God

showed you that His imagination concerning your life was bigger than yours. And maybe the next level isn’t about asking God for more. Maybe it’s waking up each morning and saying: “God, show me what You had in mind.” Naturally Charming Universe Although Naturally Charming Universe is expanding beyond its original physical location, the mission continues. Products are still available for online shopping, and distant healing sessions, spiritual clarity sessions, energy work, and spiritual guidance/counseling sessions remain available for booking. <https://linktr.ee/naturallycharminguniverse> Distance does not stop healing, purpose, or connection. Sometimes God doesn’t end the dream. He expands the territory.

<https://linktr.ee/naturallycharminguniverse>

Young Black Men and Mental Health: Suffering in Silence

By Dominic Boston

As a young Black man, this topic is personal to me. When people discuss mental health, they usually don’t picture someone who looks like me. Instead, Black men are often seen as strong, tough, or able to handle anything life throws at us. Growing up, I was taught exactly that. My elders always told me to be strong. If I got hurt, I was told to get back up. If I was upset, I was told not to cry. Showing emotion wasn’t encouraged. It was seen as a weakness. Looking back now, I realize I wasn’t just being taught how to be a man. I was being conditioned to hide my emotions. I was taught to believe that strength meant staying silent, no matter how much pain I was carrying. I know my family wasn’t trying to hurt me. They wanted me to survive in a world that has never been easy for Black men. They wanted me to be prepared for life’s challenges. But somewhere along the way, being strong became confused with pretending everything was okay. Instead of talking about

our feelings, we learned how to bury them. Instead of asking for help, we learned how to deal with everything on our own. The problem is that emotions don’t disappear just because you ignore them. They stay with you, and eventually, they find another way to come out. I believe that is the reality for many young Black men today. We’re expected to carry the weight of our families, our communities, our schools, our work, and our lives without ever breaking down. People admire our strength, but they rarely ask how much it costs to always be strong. The truth is, many of us are hurting in silence because we’ve spent our entire lives believing that is what real men are supposed to do. For many Black boys, those lessons start early. Some grow up in neighborhoods where hearing gunshots or seeing police lights is normal. Others lose friends or family members before they are even old enough to understand why. Some are raised in communities where violence, poverty, and limited opportunities are part of everyday life. When you’re constantly worried about making it



home safely or helping your family make ends meet, you don’t always have time to process your emotions. You focus on surviving. Then there is the way society sees us. Before some people even hear us speak, they have already made assumptions. Many Black men know what it feels like to be watched while shopping, stereotyped because of the clothes they wear, or judged simply because they are Black. On top of that, many of us grow up having conversations with our parents about how to act if we are ever stopped by the police.

We aren’t taught those lessons because our parents don’t trust us. We are taught them because our parents are afraid of what could happen if someone else doesn’t see our humanity. Living with that kind of pressure affects your mental health, whether people realize it or not. Constantly feeling like you have to prove you are not a threat is exhausting. Always feeling like you have to be perfect just to be treated fairly takes a toll. Those experiences create anxiety, fear, and stress that many young Black men carry every single day, even if

they never talk about it. I also think these experiences help explain why some young Black men feel disconnected from politics and voting. If you have spent your whole life watching your community struggle no matter who is in office, it is easy to believe that your vote won’t change anything. You see schools that need more resources, neighborhoods that deserve more investment, and communities asking for change year after year. After a while, some people stop believing anyone is listening. But I also believe that is exactly why voting matters. The people we elect make decisions about education, mental health funding, affordable housing, community programs, healthcare, and criminal justice. Those decisions directly affect neighborhoods like mine and families like mine. If we want things to change, we can’t sit back and expect someone else to make those choices for us. Our voices matter, and our votes do too. One of the biggest changes that needs to happen is the way we talk about mental health. We have to stop teaching

young Black boys that crying makes them weak. We have to stop acting like asking for help is something to be embarrassed about. Real strength isn’t pretending you’re okay when you’re not. Real strength is being honest enough to say you’re struggling and courageous enough to ask for help. As I continue growing into the man I want to become, I’m learning that strength and vulnerability can exist at the same time. I can be determined, hardworking and resilient while still being honest about my emotions. I don’t have to carry everything by myself, and neither does the next generation of young Black men. It’s time we change the conversation. Instead of only telling young Black boys to be strong, we should also tell them it’s okay to cry. It’s okay to talk. It’s okay to heal. Because when we create a generation of men who feel safe expressing themselves, we aren’t making them weaker. We are giving them a better chance to live healthier, happier lives. And that is the kind of strength our communities have needed all along.

‘The Wire’ Star Andre Royo Shares Personal Alzheimer’s Story in New BrightFocus Foundation Awareness Campaign

CLARKSBURG, Md.— Global brain and eye research nonprofit BrightFocus Foundation today launched its “Stop Alzheimer’s Disease” campaign featuring renowned actor, producer, and writer Andre Royo, known for his iconic portrayal as Reginald “Bubbles” Cousins in HBO’s groundbreaking drama “The Wire” and upcoming roles in James Gunn’s “Superman: Man of Tomorrow” and Amazon’s “Delphi,” set in the Creed universe and produced by Michael B. Jordan’s Outlier Society. The campaign highlights the urgency of continued funding for Alzheimer’s research and awareness of research-backed healthy lifestyle changes to reduce risk. Andre’s connection to Alzheimer’s is rooted in his own family’s experience, making the campaign especially meaningful to him. Andre’s mother, Andrea Royo, was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s in 2021. Born and raised in the Bronx, New York, Ms.

Royo was an artist and dancer who trained at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in New York City and was accepted to Juilliard. She loved music, especially salsa. She was married to Andre’s father, Louie Royo, for 64 years. After she and Mr. Royo moved to Las Vegas, Ms. Royo found purpose volunteering for then-presidential candidate Barack Obama’s campaign, which ultimately led to her being invited to the White House to meet the president. “She was really independent. She didn’t like sitting around. She liked to work,” Andre said. “To see someone like her lose her independence and not know who they are, it was wild.” Andre first noticed something was wrong when Ms. Royo struggled to remember the day of the week. Over time, he noticed her forgetting words and giving up reading, a pastime she had always loved. Initially, he assumed these were normal signs of aging. But as



Andre Royo

the disease progressed, Ms. Royo gradually lost the ability to feed herself and recognize faces. She became withdrawn and agitated, eventually requiring full-time care. She moved in with Andre, who became her primary caregiver. Ms. Royo died in December 2024 at age 79. “Caring for my mom forever changed my understanding of love, sacrifice, and the true meaning of being a son. As I became more present and began quelling my own addiction, the intimate moments and sto-

ries we shared filled me with pride, love, and a deeper understanding of who she was as a woman. I came to know my mother not only as a parent but as a woman whose life was defined by resilience and selfless love,” Andre said. Every 35 seconds, someone in the U.S. develops Alzheimer’s disease, a progressive, terminal brain disorder and leading cause of dementia that has no known cause or cure. Over 7 million Americans 65 and older are living with Alzheimer’s disease. “Knowledge is power, and when caregivers and loved ones have access to information and support, they can feel more prepared and present for the people they care for,” Andre said. “BrightFocus Foundation’s Alzheimer’s Disease Research program offers free resources to help guide families and caregivers every step of the way.” Inspired to channel his grief into something positive, Andre wrote and directed Fragments of Joy, a short film that captures Andre’s

strength in the face of adversity mirroring his mother’s struggle with the disease. BrightFocus is a sponsor of the film, which premieres this fall. The experience underscored the importance of learning about diseases such as Alzheimer’s and taking proactive steps to support brain health early in life. For Andre, that journey included confronting his relationship with alcohol and ultimately choosing sobriety. “If you know about certain diseases like Alzheimer’s and what they can do to you, you combat it by being healthy and being responsible about how you live your life,” he said. The awareness campaign also features Teri Youngdale, whose mother Gail is living with Alzheimer’s disease. Following her diagnosis, Gail enrolled in a clinical trial for a groundbreaking Alzheimer’s treatment, which has allowed her to continue living independently and maintain her quality of life. After losing her

husband of 56 years in 2021, Gail recently reconnected with her high school sweetheart and remarried. “After she was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, I saw the fighter in my mom come out,” Teri said. “She inspired me to take my own brain health seriously.” “Behind every diagnosis is a real person and a story that matters. Personal stories help put a human face on diseases like Alzheimer’s and remind us that these conditions affect entire families and communities,” said BrightFocus President and CEO Stacy Pagos Haller. “As research increasingly points to the benefits of healthy lifestyle choices, we are committed to empowering people with information to support their brain health.” To learn more about Andre and Teri’s stories, access expert resources, and explore the latest Alzheimer’s research, visit StopAD.org. To watch the Spanish-language spot, visit NoMasEA.org.



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ARTS & CULTURE

PREVIEW

By Lena W. Claybon

The trailer has just dropped for *Children of Blood and Bone*, a highly anticipated new fantasy film boasting a stellar Black-led cast that includes Viola Davis, Regina King and Idris Elba. The film is set to hit theaters in January 2027.

Inspired by West African mythology and folklore, *Children of Blood and Bone* is directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood, who co-wrote the screenplay with author Tomi Adeyemi. The film is based on Adeyemi's

bestselling 2018 novel of the same name.

The story follows a young woman blessed with magical powers by the gods but living in a land where using those powers is forbidden. She joins forces with a princess on a dangerous mission to summon the gods, restore magic and challenge the oppressive regime determined to keep people like her powerless.

Watching the trailer, it's hard not to draw comparisons to *Black Panther*.

Both films center Black protagonists in sweeping, big-budget fantasy worlds inspired by African cultures



and traditions. Both feature prominent Black casts and creative talent, while ex-

ploring powerful kingdoms, leadership, ancient traditions and extraordinary abilities that those in power seek to control or destroy.

But that's where the comparison should end.

Children of Blood and Bone is not another *Black Panther*. Its story, characters and mythology are distinctly its own. And if the trailer is any indication, the film should be able to stand on its own as another visually stunning, culturally rich fantasy epic that just happens to put Black characters front and center.

That distinction matters.

For decades, major Hollywood fantasy franchises rarely placed Black characters at the center of imaginary kingdoms, magical worlds and epic adventures. The enormous success of *Black Panther* demonstrated that audiences around the world would enthusiastically embrace those stories.

Now, *Children of Blood and Bone* has an opportunity to further expand that landscape — not by trying to duplicate what came before it, but by introducing moviegoers to an entirely different world rooted in African-inspired mythology

and storytelling.

And much like *Black Panther*, *Children of Blood and Bone* appears to have all the ingredients to become more than simply another movie release. With its acclaimed cast, celebrated source material, epic scale and striking visuals, it has the potential to generate massive audience excitement when it arrives in theaters in January 2027.

If the trailer is any indication, audiences may be getting ready to enter a whole new world — and this time, Black heroes are once again at the center of it.

100 Years After Carter G. Woodson, New Orleans Pioneers Black Education History Week

Orleans Parish School Board establishes New Orleans Black Education History Week, a first-of-its-kind annual observance launching November 15–20, 2026

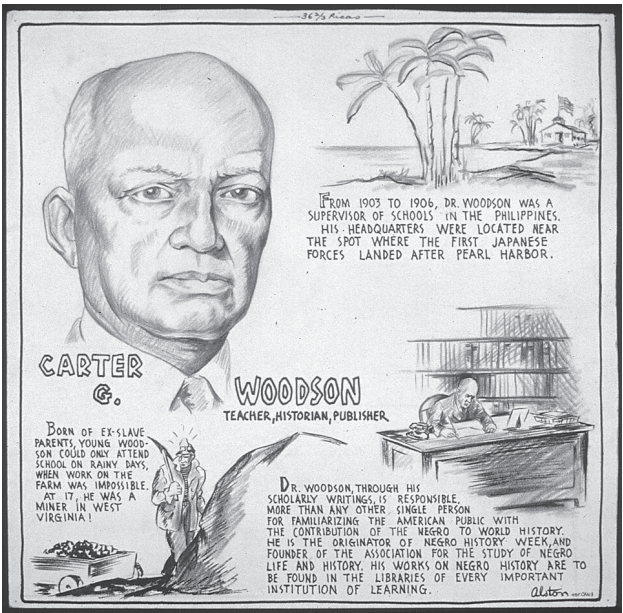
NEW ORLEANS — One hundred years after Carter G. Woodson pioneered Negro History Week, New Orleans is establishing a week of its own.

BE NOLA (Black Education for New Orleans) will host a press conference Tuesday, September 15, from 10:00 to 10:45 a.m. to announce the inaugural New Orleans Black Education History Week (NOBEHW), November 15–20, 2026. Established by Orleans Parish School Board resolution, the annual observance will celebrate the history, legacy and fu-

ture of Black education in New Orleans.

"Black education has always been a defining part of the story of New Orleans. New Orleans Black Education History Week gives us the opportunity to make that history visible — not simply as something to remember, but as a living legacy that continues to shape how we educate, empower and see our children," said Adrinna "Drin" Kelly, Executive Director, BE NOLA.

The press conference will take place at the Tate, Etienne, Prevost (TEP) Center, 5909 St. Claude Ave., where six-year-olds Leona Tate, Gail Etienne and Tessie Prevost integrated the former McDonogh 19 Elementary School on November 14, 1960. The historic site, now operated by the Leona Tate Foundation



for Change, is a NOBEHW program partner.

Adopted July 30 following a campaign led by BE NOLA with Orleans Parish School Board members Gabriela Biro and Leila Eames, NOBEHW will bring Black

educational history into classrooms and community spaces across New Orleans.

The observance opens November 15 with a community pop-up village at the Central Station Hub at Merchant Hall. Throughout the week, students will participate in programming at schools and partner sites across the city, including the TEP Center and Amistad Research Center. The week concludes November 20 with a Black is Brilliant Summit pop-up experience presented by Entergy New Orleans.

Nearly 20 schools and more than 30 cultural institutions, historians and community organizations are participating. Programming is free and opt-in.

New Orleans Black Education History Week is presented by the Institute of Mental Hygiene, with major

support from Entergy New Orleans, the New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Foundation, and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana.

"We are proud to support BE NOLA's vision because this is not simply a celebration of the past—it is an investment in how young people understand themselves, their communities and their capacity to shape the future," said Ron McClain, CEO, Institute of Mental Hygiene.

The observance is produced by Saint Josephine Consultants, with creative direction by Stevona LLC and partner engagement by The Dottin-Haley Group.

For the full schedule, registration and free classroom resources, visit BIBWeek.com.

Presented by the Institute of Mental Hygiene

Soul of the Stone: A Living Sculpture Journey from Zimbabwe to Chicago

Internationally-Acclaimed Sculptor, Ishmael Chitiyo, Commissioned to Create Stone Sculpture for the Field Museum

CHICAGO, IL — Gallery Guichard and Donat Life Illinois proudly present "Soul of the Stone," an eight-month cultural and artistic experience celebrating the rich tradition of Zimbabwean Shona stone sculptures, in partnership with the Field Museum, the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), the Chicago Park District, Garfield Park Conservatory, South Shore Cultural Center and Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network.

At the heart of this extraordinary exhibition is internationally-recognized Zimbabwean sculptor Ishmael Chitiyo, who has been commissioned to create a stone sculpture that will be featured in the Field Museum's new Africa Hall, opening in 2028. As one of the largest and few Shona sculpture exhibits in the United States, Chicago will have the rare opportunity to discover the profound connection between the stone and the spiritual world, while experiencing the artistry and history of the Shona Tribe.

With more than 150 Shona sculptures on exhibition across partner galleries and locations through early 2027, Chicago communities are invited to register via the event links to attend each location's opening reception, to explore and experience a different part of the art in-

stallations and the city's diverse neighborhoods.

Garfield Park Conservatory
300 N Central Park Ave, Chicago
Sept. 5, 12-2 p.m.

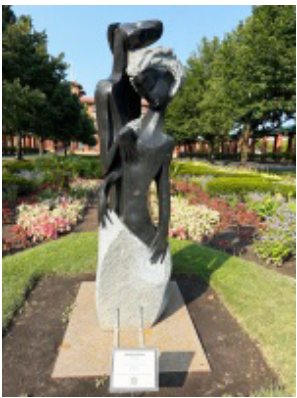
City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE)
78 E Washington St, Chicago
Sept. 11, 6-8 p.m.

Gallery Guichard
436 E 47th St, Chicago
Sept. 18, 6-9 p.m.

South Shore Cultural Center
7059 S South Shore Drive, Chicago
Sept. 26, 12-2 p.m.

Field Museum
1400 S DuSable Lake Shore Drive, Chicago
Oct. 3, 12-4 p.m.

"The 'Soul of the Stone' exhibition allows the public to witness something rarely seen—the transformation of Shona stones into monumental works of art," said Gallery Guichard Co-Own-



ers Andre and Frances Guichard. "People will not simply view the finished sculptures; they will become part of their story by visiting each exhibition across the city, and we're honored to bring this experience to Chicago with our talented artists and community partners."

During Gallery Guichard's first journey to Zimbabwe, more than 150 sculptures were brought to the United States, plac-

ing over 120 cultural works into private and corporate collections. Their most recent acquisition included over 170 sculptures, further strengthening the connection between Zimbabwean artists and American art collectors.

Featured Zimbabwean artists in the exhibition include: Ishmael Chitiyo, Chenjerai Chiripanyanga, Lawrence Trivangani, Witness Bonjisi, Bernard Mutohoda, Tawanda Seremwe, John Chewa, Spencer Chigombe, Nickson Muti, Clever Monera, Personal Zenda, Godfrey Matangira, Owen Mlungisi, Tafadzwa Mandela, Edmore Sango, Takudzwa, Tyrone Chiripanyanga, Douglas Musekiwa, William Wilberforce Chewa, Bernard Mtumozwa, Thomas Nyasoka, Confidence Zinyeka, Lovemore Bonjisi, Bywell Sango, Vernon Nyagweta, Latwin Mugavazi, Patrick Fredy, Bernard Sakarombe, Clemen-

cia Ncube, Munyardzi Nyagura, Amos Chitiyo, Marlon Chitiyo, Melody Fombe, Lorraine Mamvura, Elvis Mamvura, Snowden Nkamajo, Marshall Mangwere, Pheoleen Gandari, Anthony Masamba, Steven Chikweya, Casten Chapenga, Tawanda Makore, Moses Makore, Christopher Tigere, Tafadzwa Tandi, Simon Chidhara, Farai Nyakanyanza,

Marshford Kanyemba, Casten Chapenga, Farai Nyakanyanza, and Alfred Mutuke. Each sculptor draws inspiration from the mbira, a traditional music instrument integral to the Shona people. Its enchanting sounds serve as a call to the ancestors, guiding artists on their journey to sculpt unique and powerful artwork.

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SPORTS

Grambling State Roars Past Central State 48-26

GRAMBLING, La. | Grambling State piled up 644 yards of total offense in a 48-26 victory over Central State at Eddie G. Robinson Memorial Stadium on Saturday night. GSU improved to 2-0 while CSU fell to 0-2. Grambling State wasted no time establishing control. On the opening drive of the game, running back Jamaron Parker broke free for a 40-yard touchdown run just over two minutes into the contest, capping a five-play, 75-yard drive. The Tigers' defense forced a quick three-and-out, and Diego Alfaro connected on a 19-yard field goal to extend the lead to 10-0. Central State couldn't find any answers on either side of the ball in the opening frame, and Alfaro added a second field goal — this one from 24 yards — to push Grambling's advantage to 13-0 after one quarter. The second quarter saw GSU's rushing attack take over. D'Shaun Ford punched in a short touchdown run to make it 20-0, and after Central State answered with a Kenyon Gardner field goal, Tony

Phillips Jr. blew the game further open with a 75-yard touchdown scamper on just Tigers' second play of the possession, giving the Tigers a commanding 27-3 lead. CSU's offense found some rhythm late in the half behind quarterback Jackson Wasik, who connected with Damon Griffin Jr. on a 12-yard touchdown pass to cut the deficit to 27-10 heading into the locker room. Grambling's defense also got a boost when a blocked field goal attempt by Markeis Sykes kept points off the board for the Marauders earlier in the half. GSU didn't let up after the break. A nine-play, 45-yard drive ended with Clyde McClendon Jr. punching it in from 2 yards out, extending the lead to 34-10 with 7:34 remaining in the third quarter. The Tigers' defense also came up with a pair of interceptions in the period — one each from Jaylen Burrell — to help control the game's tempo, and the Tigers carried a commanding 24-point lead into the fourth quarter. Central State made things interesting in the final period.



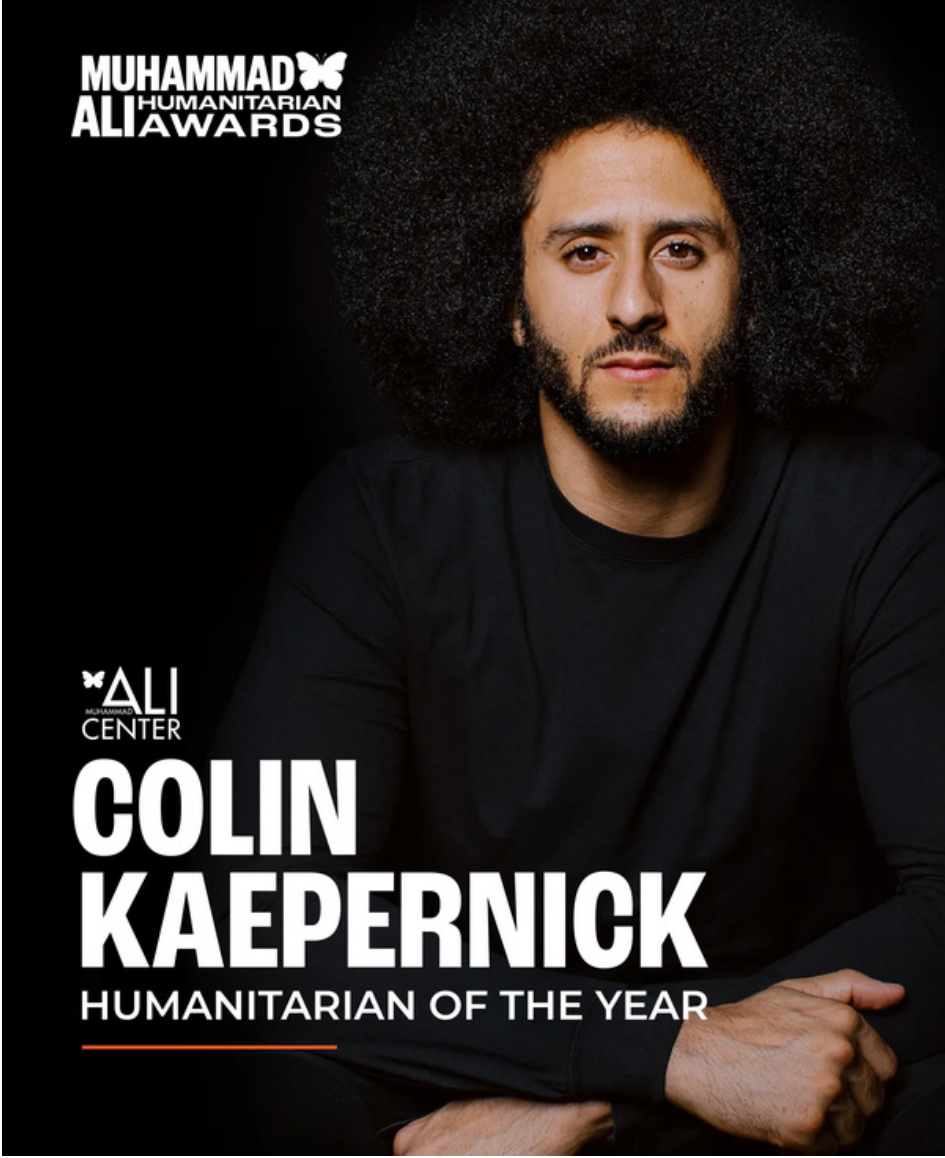
GSU vs Central State

od. Wasik scored on a 15-yard touchdown run and connected with Avantae Burt on a two-point conversion pass to make it 34-18, and after Byron Eaton Jr. answered right back with a 58-yard touchdown burst for Grambling, Wasik found Burt again — this time for a 29-yard touchdown recep-

tion — to pull the Marauders within 41-26 with just over four minutes to play. But Grambling State's offense closed the door for good. The Tigers put together an eight-play, 75-yard drive capped by Hayden Benoit's 1-yard touchdown run with 31 seconds left, sealing the 48-26 final.

Grambling's ground game was the story of the night, piling up 361 rushing yards on 40 carries (9.0 yards per carry) with six rushing touchdowns. Five different Tigers scored on the ground: Phillips Jr., Parker, Eaton Jr., Ford, Benoit and McClendon Jr. Quarterback Reginald

Johnson led the Grambling passing attack, completing 18 of 23 attempts for 258 yards, spreading the ball to eight different receivers. Tyson George (5 catches, 93 yards) and Jordan Bride (3 catches, 70 yards) paced the receiving corps. Defensively, Grambling racked up two sacks, six tackles for loss and forced two interceptions — both hauled in by Jaylen Burrell — while also blocking a field goal. Marcellius Johnson and Lonell Cunningham each finished with 7 total tackles to lead the unit. Grambling State also won the field-position and time-of-possession battles, holding the ball for 33:11 compared to Central State's 26:49, and converting 9 of 12 third-down opportunities compared to the Marauders' 7 of 14. Up Next Grambling State gears up to travel to Ft. Worth, Texas to take on FBS and Big 12 opponent TCU on Saturday, Sept. 12. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. at Amon G. Carter Stadium. The game will be streamed on ESPN+.



Colin Kaepernick Named Muhammad Ali Humanitarian of the Year

Civil Rights Activist and Legendary NFL Quarterback Will Be Honored at the Muhammad Ali Humanitarian Awards on Nov. 7 in Louisville, KY. Philanthropists Steve and Amy Trager Will Receive the 'Kentucky Humanitarian Award' for Their Service to the Louisville Community The Ceremony Will Also Spotlight Six Young International Changemakers (Black PR Wire) LOUISVILLE, KY — The Muhammad Ali Center has named legendary NFL quarterback, civil rights activist and entrepreneur Colin Kaepernick as the recipient of its 'Humanitarian of the Year' award. Kaepernick will receive the honor at the 13th annual Muhammad Ali Humanitarian Awards, the Center's largest annual fundraiser to support the Center's mission-based programs and events. It will take place on November 7 in Louisville, KY. Kaepernick joins an esteemed class of 'Humanitarian of the Year' recipients since the launch of the Muhammad Ali Humanitarian Awards in 2013, including Shaquille O'Neal, Christina Aguilera, Michael J. Fox, Common, Patricia Arquette,

Geena Davis, and more. "Colin was chosen for his courage to stand against racial injustice and his unwavering commitment to empowering underserved communities. Like Muhammad, Colin has used his platform to advocate for equality, human dignity, and social change, even when doing so came at significant personal and professional cost," said Lonnie Ali, Co-Founder and President & CEO of the Muhammad Ali Center. "Through Know Your Rights Camp and his broader philanthropic efforts, Colin has turned his convictions into meaningful action by educating, empowering, and supporting young people and communities. His courage, sacrifice, and sustained dedication to service embody the humanitarian spirit and enduring legacy of Muhammad Ali." "Receiving the Muhammad Ali Center's Humanitarian of the Year Award is an incredible honor," said Colin Kaepernick. "Muhammad Ali lived with an uncommon courage to stand firmly in his convictions, even when doing so came at a great personal cost. He understood that our platforms are not sim-

ply ours to benefit from, but ours to use in service of others. To be recognized in his name is simultaneously humbling and a responsibility. I remain committed to bring about justice, uplift our communities, and develop a world where all people can live with freedom, dignity, and self-determination." In addition to Kaepernick, this year's honorees include Louisville philanthropists Steve and Amy Trager who will receive the 'Kentucky Humanitarian Award.' Six young adults ages 30 years or younger will also be recognized for promoting positive change in their communities and beyond. "We are deeply honored to receive the Muhammad Ali Kentucky Humanitarian Award," said Steve and Amy Trager. "Muhammad Ali showed the world that true greatness is measured not by personal achievement, but by how we serve others. This recognition reflects the work of countless nonprofit leaders, community partners, and volunteers who dedicate themselves every day to making a difference. We are grateful to play a small role in helping strengthen the community we love."



GSU vs Nicholls - Volleyball

Grambling State rallies past Nicholls, 3-1

GRAMBLING, La. | Grambling State volleyball bounced back from a first-set setback by winning three consecutive sets Wednesday evening, earning a 3-1 victory over Nicholls at the Fredrick C. Hobdy Assembly Center. The Tigers fell 25-14 in the opening set before responding with wins of 25-23, 25-22 and 25-19 to improve to 2-2 on the season. Nicholls dropped to 2-2. Grambling State's offense was led by Lyric Jordan, who recorded a team-high 12 kills on 34 attacks while hitting .324 for the match. Jordan also contributed a service ace, a solo block and four digs to finish with 14 points. Amaris Marks added eight kills on 17 attacks and hit a team-best .353 among Grambling State players with at least 10 attempts. Bailey Hollis and Rihanna Brown each finished with four kills, while Angelique Pena added three. Brown was particularly efficient offensively, recording four kills on six attacks without an error for a .667 hitting percentage. She also added a

block and a dig. After struggling offensively in the opening set, Grambling State found its rhythm over the final three sets. The Tigers hit .143 as a team for the match, including a .333 mark in the third set and .444 in the fourth. Grambling State's 25-23 second-set victory evened the match before the Tigers took control with a 25-22 win in the third set. GSU closed out the match by hitting .444 in the fourth set, finishing with 13 kills and only one error on 27 attacks. The Tigers also received strong contributions from their setters and defensive unit. Alayna Howard led Grambling State with 18 assists, while Reece Cook added 14 assists and provided four service aces. Howard also recorded a service ace and six digs. Hailey Botello paced the Tigers with 10 digs, while Asialin Powell added eight. Howard finished with six digs, and Lainy Evans contributed three.

Grambling State's serving game produced nine aces, with Cook leading the way with four. Avri Solik-Fifarek added three service aces despite seeing action in two sets. The Tigers also finished with 11 total blocks. Bailey Hollis and Jaida Gray each recorded three blocks, while Hollis had one solo block and two block assists. Gray added one solo block and two assists. Nicholls was led offensively by Kera Arrington, who posted 16 kills, while McKenzie Mitchell recorded 11 kills and Maya Schirmer added nine. The Colonels finished with 49 kills compared with 37 for Grambling State, but the Tigers capitalized on Nicholls' 32 attack errors. Grambling State also benefited from Nicholls committing 11 reception errors, while the Tigers committed 11 reception errors of their own. The victory gives Grambling State its second win of the season and continues the Tigers' early-season home schedule.

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