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THE GRAMBLING CONNECTION

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"Keeping Our Citizens Informed on the Issues That Matter"
Grambling, LA



PREPCHELLA 2026: Lincoln Preparatory School Celebrates 10 Years of Panther Pride

GRAMBLING, La. — Lincoln Preparatory School is preparing to celebrate a major milestone this fall as the Panther Family marks the school's 10-year anniversary with PREPCHELLA: The Decennial Celebration, a special Homecoming experience scheduled for October 5–9, 2026.

Presented by the Merit Administration, PREPCHELLA will transform Homecoming Week into a celebration of Lincoln Prep's first decade—honoring the students, families, educators, alumni, supporters, traditions and memories that have helped shape the school since its establishment in 2016.

Ten Years. One Legacy. One Panther Family. The 2026 celebration represents more than a traditional Homecoming. It is an opportunity for the entire Panther community to reflect on 10 years of growth, perseverance, achievement and Panther Pride while looking ahead to the school's next chapter.

Throughout the week, Lincoln Prep plans to bring together current students and staff, alumni, former employees, families and community supporters for a series of activities designed to make the school's 10th anniversary one to remember. The PREPCHELLA theme brings a festival-style energy to this year's celebration, with the school embracing the excitement, color and atmosphere of a major homecoming experience.

Meet the 2026–2027 Royal Court. Adding to the excitement, Lincoln Preparatory School has announced members of its 2026–2027 Royal Court, elected by the student body.

Miss Lincoln Preparatory School is Zamiyah Page, joined by C'Terryca Glover, Miss Senior; Jamyah Graham, Miss Junior; Jelayah Hicks, Miss Sophomore; and Chloe Clemons, Miss Freshman. The Middle School Royal Court and Student Government Association will also represent the Panther Family. Alijah A. Wright will serve as SGA President, alongside Demarion Marray, Vice President, and Zyiah West, Secretary-Treasurer. Grade-level representatives and Little Miss honor-ees will represent grades five through eight.

Lincoln Prep's youngest Panthers will also be part of the tradition, with Merica Benton, TyTiera Singleton, True Jackson, Somma Cain and Tyra Jones serving as Little Miss representatives for kindergarten through fourth grade.

Together, these students will have a special place in a Homecoming year unlike any other in Lincoln Prep history. **See PREPCHELLA Page 2**

Buc-ee's CEO's Comments Spark Backlash and Boycott Calls

By Lena W. Claybon

Buc-ee's hasn't even opened the doors to its new Ruston travel center yet, but comments from the popular chain's CEO are stirring controversy and prompting some consum-

ers to call for a boycott.

Arch "Beaver" Aplin III, co-founder and CEO of the Texas-based travel center chain, drew attention following remarks he made August 17 at the grand opening of a new Buc-ee's in Benton, Arkansas.

"We have a lot of opportunities. We're growing. We're building in a lot of places," Aplin told the crowd. "But when you find a conservative, business-friendly state with a phenomenal workforce, it makes a difference."

Aplin went further, saying he was "starting to realize life's too short to try to build in places that people don't appreciate what you're bringing versus a place like this, where people do appreciate what you're building."

See Buc-ee's Page 2



Buc-ee's CEO, Arch "Beaver" Aplin III, speaks to attendees

Andrew Young, Eric Holder reflect on the state of civil, voting rights after court decisions

By William J. Ford

When Andrew Young rose from his motorized chair and took his seat on stage last Friday, he received rousing applause.

U.S. Rep. Shomari Figures, an Alabama Democrat, recounted Young's storied journey. Pastor. Mayor of Atlanta. Congressman. U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Civil rights icon.

Working alongside the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Young played a key role with other civil rights leaders in securing support for Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Now 94, Young is among the few surviving mem-



From left, Andrew Young, Eric Holder and Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.) participate in a panel discussion Friday at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's 55th annual legislative conference in Washington, D.C. (Photo by William J. Ford/Maryland Matters)

bers of King's inner circle.

"One thing I really want to make sure that everybody understands. That we are in the presence here of a legend," said former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, the nation's first Black attorney general.

"All that I've been able to do, all that Shomari has been able to do, all that Congresswoman (Terri) Sewell has been able to do, is as a result of the great work, the sacrifices, the commitment, the determination and the courage of this man," Holder said.

But the landmark legislation that Young helped draft has been upended by legal challenges, with the U.S. Supreme Court recently dealing the Voting Rights Act a blow. In April, the nation's highest court ruled in *Callais v. Louisiana* that the state's use of race-based redistricting amounted to an "unconstitutional racial gerrymander."

"What worries me about this moment now is that this administration, aided by this Supreme Court, is bound and determined to take us back to a time that I thought, that we all thought, that might have been behind us," Holder said. Said Young: "I don't know where we are now."

See Andrew Young Page 3



President Lemelle is surrounded by students, faculty, staff and friends of the University at Opening of Student Success Center

Grambling State University Celebrates Opening of New Student Success Center

GRAMBLING, La. — Grambling State University celebrated the opening of its new Student Success Center on Friday, Sept. 4, marking a major milestone in the

University's continued investment in student success and the campus experience.

University leaders, students, project partners, and members of the cam-

pus community gathered for the ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially open the three-story, 60,000-square-foot facility, which brings key student services into one

central location.

The Student Success Center houses Campus Living and Housing, University College and academic support services, Career and Pro-

fessional Development, Admissions and Recruitment, and Financial Aid. The centralized model is designed to improve access, coordination, and service delivery for

students as they move through the enrollment, academic support, housing, financial aid, and career development experience.

See Grambling Page 2



OPINION

They Have Forgotten Who They Work For

By Prentiss Smith

There is something profoundly wrong with American politics, and it has little to do with whether a politician wears a red tie or a blue one. It is much more fundamental than that, and I have written about it on several occasions. These politicians take us for granted. I think they think we are all “dupes.” Politicians at every level of government—local, state and federal—appear to have forgotten who they work for. I have seen many a politician change before my eyes. We elect them. We pay their salaries. We finance their offices, their staffs, their travel and, in many cases, their generous benefits. And yet, somewhere along the way, far too many elected officials have developed the attitude that they are somehow above the people who hired them—us, the regular citizens. That isn’t public service. That’s arrogance. Think about the arrangement. The average Ameri-

can worries about whether they can afford health insurance, whether their employer will continue to provide it. Meanwhile, politicians here in Shreveport and around the country, routinely enjoy taxpayer-supported compensation and benefits that are considerably more secure than those available to many of the people paying for them. That disconnect should bother all of us. And it isn’t just Washington. I see it in state capitols. I see it in city halls. I see it in parish and county governments. I see it on school boards and other public bodies. They become accustomed to the power. They become accustomed to the perks. They become accustomed to being surrounded by people who tell them how important they are. Public office was never supposed to be a pathway to privilege. It was supposed to be a responsibility. We see people go to Washington as a pauper, and come back a millionaire. I think that is wrong, and so do the majority of Americans. I have always believed that the



Prentiss Smith

citizen is the boss. The politician is the employee. It really isn’t complicated. If I owned a company, and one of my employees consistently ignored customers, wasted the company’s money and refused to listen to the people paying the bills, that employee probably wouldn’t last very long, and that is the way it should be. We struggle with the cost of health care while they debate policies that often have little connec-

tion to the reality experienced by working families. We worry about crime, education, housing and the cost of simply surviving while politicians become consumed with reelection, fundraising, party loyalty and protecting their political careers. And when citizens object, we are often told to wait. Wait for the next election. Wait for the next legislative session. Wait for the next budget. Wait for the next committee hearing. But government doesn’t get to tell the people who pay the bills to wait indefinitely while politicians continue collecting their paychecks. There is a word for what elected officials are supposed to practice: Accountability. It means remembering that every public dollar ultimately belongs to the public. It means remembering that every government office exists because taxpayers created and funded it. It means remembering that the people standing outside the halls of government are not subjects. They are the owners. And perhaps most importantly, it means remembering that political power is temporary. Every politician eventually leaves office. Did you remember who paid your salary? These are not partisan questions. We don’t need politicians who believe they are our rulers. We need public servants who understand they are our representatives. The sheer arrogance of a public official who forgets that the person standing before them is not an inconvenience, a nuisance or an adversary—but the very person who makes their job possible—is difficult to understand. Perhaps we need to return to a simpler understanding of public service. You were elected to serve. You were not elected to rule. You were entrusted with power. You were not given ownership of it. And one day, the voters will decide whether you deserve another opportunity to serve. Until then, remember who you work for. And that’s my take. smithpren@aol.com

POTTER MOTIVATION

Quit Holding Back

By Rusty Potter

This past Labor Day weekend, several class reunions were held across our area. Old classmates gathered together, laughed, shared old memories, took pictures, and talked about the good old days. For many, it had been years since they had seen one another. Class reunions have a way of making you reflect. You look around the room and remember who people were in high school. You remember the athlete, the smartest student, the quiet person, and the person everyone believed was destined to do something great.

Then, after the hugs and laughing, another question sometimes enters the conversation: “So, what have you been doing?” Years have passed. Lives have been lived. Some dreams have become reality, while others remain only dreams. And sometimes, silently, people begin thinking about the things they could have accomplished. “I could have gone to college.” “I should have started that business.” “I would have pursued my dream, but life got in the way.” Could have. Should have. Would have. These three phrases can become painful when we spend too



Rusty Potter

much time looking in the rear-view mirror. The truth is, we all have poten-

tial. The question is not whether we have it, but whether we are using it. Too many people go through life holding back their gifts, ideas, talents, and dreams. They wait for the perfect time. They wait until they have more money, more confidence, or more support. But one day, they look up and realize that years have passed. That is why you cannot afford to keep holding back. You may not be able to change what you did not do yesterday, but you can still decide what you will do today. As long as you have breath in your body, you still have an opportunity to begin again. The Bible says in Philippians

3:13, “Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.” Don’t allow your life to become a collection of regrets. Don’t wait until the next class reunion to wonder what might have happened if you had taken a chance. Start now. Use your gift. Pursue the dream. Take the class. Write the book. Start the business. Quit holding back. Because the worst words to carry into your future may be these: “I could have. I should have. I would have” can become the story you tell about your life.

Buc-ee’s From Page 1

He also described a “conservative, business-friendly, family-oriented” philosophy that he said works better when it “trickles down” from state and local political leadership — including governors, members of Congress, senators, mayors and representatives. The remarks have generated criticism online, particularly from consumers who believe Aplin unnecessarily injected partisan politics into a brand patronized by people across the political spectrum. Some critics interpreted the comments as suggesting that people in Democratic-leaning states do not share Buc-ee’s values or would not “appreciate” what the company brings to their communities. Others see it as a dog whistle for Maga-leaning politics and questioned why political ideology should factor into deciding which communities receive the jobs and economic development associated with a new Buc-ee’s. Calls to boycott the chain have followed. The San Antonio Express-News reported that one Instagram post calling for a Buc-ee’s boycott received nearly 89,000 likes, while another post specifically urging a boycott because of Aplin’s political giving received approximately 28,000 likes. The controversy also has drawn attention to Aplin’s

political contributions. The Express-News, citing Transparency USA, reported that Aplin has contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to campaigns supporting Republican candidates and officeholders. Aplin’s political contributions have drawn criticism before, and Buc-ee’s faced boycott calls as far back as 2014 after its owners endorsed Republican Dan Patrick in his campaign for Texas lieutenant governor. Why the Comments Are Striking a Nerve For many of those criticizing Buc-ee’s, the issue appears to go beyond the political views of its CEO. Business owners and executives have the same right as anyone else to hold and express political views. What has angered some consumers is Aplin’s decision to publicly connect those views to the company’s expansion strategy. The comments come at a time when Americans are increasingly making purchasing decisions based on the perceived political and social positions of corporations and their executives. Buc-ee’s has built a broad and enthusiastic following around something decidedly nonpolitical — road trips, clean bathrooms, barbecue, snacks and its familiar beaver mascot. Aplin’s remarks have now placed the company in the middle of the nation’s partisan divide. Aplin also did not an-

nounce a formal policy prohibiting Buc-ee’s from entering Democratic-led states. His remarks instead indicated a preference for what he considers “conservative” and business-friendly political environments. Controversy Comes as Buc-ee’s Expands The political backlash arrives while Buc-ee’s is already facing criticism on another front. The company has been embroiled in a trademark dispute with Beaver’s Mini Mart, a small convenience store in Beavercreek, Ohio. Buc-ee’s contends that the smaller store’s beaver logo infringes on its trademark. That fight has generated its own grassroots backlash, with residents, businesses and public officials rallying around the local store. Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine, a Republican, called Buc-ee’s lawsuit “absurd,” while Beavercreek officials passed a resolution recognizing the beaver as part of the city’s history. The controversy has also produced social-media posts using the hashtag #BoycottBucees. Buc-ee’s Is Coming to Ruston Whatever effect the national controversy ultimately has on the company, it hits especially close to home in Lincoln Parish. Construction is underway on Louisiana’s first Buc-ee’s in Ruston near Interstate 20 and

Tarbutton Road. The City of Ruston says the massive travel center is expected to include more than 70,000 square feet of retail space and more than 100 fuel pumps, with a projected opening in 2027. The project has been promoted as a major economic development opportunity for the area. Earlier reports estimated that the Ruston location could create approximately 200 jobs and attract thousands of vehicles a day. Buc-ee’s own website continues to list among its planned 2027 openings. The company also plans a second Louisiana location in Lafayette in 2028. That makes the controversy more than a distant social-media debate for residents of Grambling, Ruston and the surrounding area. Buc-ee’s is preparing to become one of Lincoln Parish’s most recognizable new businesses and a significant local employer. Whether the CEO’s comments will have any measurable effect on the company’s enormous popularity remains to be seen. The criticism does, however, illustrate the risk companies face when their corporate identity becomes intertwined with partisan politics: customers who once saw only brisket, Beaver Nuggets and a place to fill up the tank may begin seeing something else when they look at that familiar Buc-ee’s sign.

Grambling From Page 1

Developed in partnership with Black & Gold Facilities, Inc., supported by M3A Architecture and Lincoln Builders, and made possible through funding from the U.S. Department of Education, the Student Success Center is one of Grambling State University’s most significant recent investments in student-centered infrastructure. “This morning, we can say, ‘Look what we’ve built,’” said Grambling State University President Martin Lemelle Jr., D.B.A., during the ceremony. “As you experience this space today, you will see a space where customer service is our top priority.” The opening comes during Grambling State University’s historic Multiversity celebration, honoring 125 years of academic excellence, 100 years of Tiger Athletics, and 100 years of the World Famed Tiger Marching Band. The new facility adds to the University’s momentum as it continues strengthening the spaces, services, and systems that support student achievement. University of Louisiana System President Rick Gallo, J.D., who previously served as president of Grambling State University, emphasized that the facility was created with students at the center. “This building is not about any of us who will speak on this microphone today,” Gallo said. “It’s about giving you all the opportunity to matriculate in the space that

is all about your success.” Jackie Slack, president of Black & Gold Facilities, Inc., said the project represents the fulfillment of a clear charge to design and deliver a facility that meets the needs of current and future students. Slack also noted that the \$25 million project was delivered on time and within budget. Representatives from M3A Architecture and Lincoln Builders joined University officials in celebrating the facility’s completion. M3A Principal and Managing Architect William L. McElroy described the building as a space designed to support the student body and the continued growth of Grambling State University, while Lincoln Builders Project Manager Tobin Pritchard recognized the strong partnerships formed throughout the construction process. Brandon A. Logan, Vice President for Advancement and Innovation, called the Student Success Center a new standard for what is possible on campus. “When you think about what this building represents, this is the starting point of a new level of excellence,” Logan said. “We’ve shown you what’s possible, what we can do on this campus, and this is what it looks like moving forward.” With the opening of the Student Success Center, Grambling State University continues to advance its mission by creating spaces that place students at the center of service, support, opportunity, and long-term success.

PREPCHELLA From Page 1

As Lincoln Preparatory School enters its second decade, Homecoming 2026 will

celebrate where the school has been while generating excitement about where the Panther Family is headed next. Additional details, includ-

ing the full PREPCHELLA Homecoming Week schedule, activities and celebration information, will be announced in the coming weeks.

Save the Dates: October 5–9, 2026. PREPCHELLA: The Decennial Celebration 10 YEARS. ONE LEGACY.

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COMMUNITY

‘Let’s Talk About It’ takes first steps

By Joice M, Dunn

“LET’S TALK ABOUT IT” was presented by Black Men in Purple, in conjunction with the City of Grambling Leadership and HBCU Boosters on Saturday, Sept. 19, in the Grambling City Park.

“Today is about bringing our community together to listen, learn, ask questions, and engage. We are especially pleased to have State Representative Rashid Young attending as part of our revised schedule. Today is not about working in silos. It is about coming together as a community, hearing different perspectives, asking important questions, and making sure the voices of our citizens are heard,” explained Gregory Ludley, executive director of Black Men in Purple.

The daylong session was cut short because of the extreme heat; emphasis was

placed on the candidate forums and direct conversations with those seeking to serve the community. All eligible citizens were encouraged to listen to the candidates and issues in order to participate in the electoral process.

Ludley reminded the crowd that their vote is their voice, and an engaged community is a stronger community.

As Mayor Alvin Bradley presented the State of the City message, he combined it with his candidate’s speech for re-election. He told of the fourth-generation commitment to Grambling State University which exemplifies his commitment to the city.

“The progress in the city thus far was not just because of me, but the five City Council persons who have come together with me, rather than work in silos. We don’t always agree, but we agree to disagree so we can get things



Attendees at Event

done,” said Bradley.

Bradley said the city has grown under his administration, naming businesses that have opened and now progressing.

The City of Grambling has joined forces with Grambling State University through a MOU, receiving a \$1.5 million grant for sidewalks and other improvements to the city as well as the campus. The Mayor mentioned two (\$100,000 each) funds for Park and Recreation improvements. He talked about a Ten-Year Master plan for the city for which the citizens had input. The plan in-

cludes a park, recreation area and other city improvements which will be ready for review shortly.

Bradley ended his message by saying, “I am an open book, what you see is what you get.”

The “LET’S TALK ABOUT IT” session allowed other candidates running for office to present their platforms to the people. Present were: Lisa Anders for Police Jury; DeVaria Ponton, re-election for Grambling City Council; Add Goff, Ruston City Judge; Deloris W. Smith, re-election for Grambling City Council; Troy

Brooks, District nine police jury; Cathy Giles, re-election for Grambling City Council; Garnet Wagner, Grambling City Council; Phillip Ellis, District Judge-Division B; Mike Smith, City Judge; David Ferguson, Grambling City Council; Edward Jones, Mayor of Grambling; Mary Gipson, Grambling City Council; Greta Carter, School Board-District 2; Lewis Jones, District Judge; Richard Anderson, School Board-District 11 and Richard Bates for Lincoln Parish School Board.

State Representative Rashid Young made an appearance to explain mainly the ten amendments on the ballot for voters. He, along with others, reminded voters of election dates: Early Voting takes place October 20-27 (except Sunday, Oct. 25) from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Election day is Tuesday, Nov. 3 from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Ludley personally rec-

ognized and thanked those who made the program possible: Mayor Alvin Bradley and the City of Grambling, Black Men in Purple, Candidate for Judge Mike Smith, Judge Monique Clement, Committee to Elect Troy Brooks, Candidate for Judge Add Goff and special thanks to the HBCU Boosters and community supporters. He thanked elected officials, candidates, volunteers, donors, sponsors, community partners, and supporters.

“As we move toward the November elections, we encourage everyone who is eligible to get informed, make your own decision, and participate by voting. The second half of “LET’S TALK ABOUT IT” will take place before the November elections at Grambling City Hall with a date and time: TBA,” said Ludley.

A lunch was provided before dismissal.

Candidate’s Profile: John Brown

Brown announces re-election bid for Grambling City Council

Grambling City Councilman, John F. Brown, Jr. has announced his candidacy for re-election and officially qualified on August 8, 2026. His message and commitment remain “Working Together for Positive Change” which cultivates growth and progress.

John is a lifelong resident of Grambling, and it has been an honor to him serving the Grambling residents for the past three and a half years.

If re-elected, John’s pledge is to continue to approach citizens’ concerns with an open mind. He promises to continue being thoughtful, respectful, sincere and as active as he can in delivering results. John re-

mains driven and committed to solutions regarding attracting additional businesses, supporting Grambling’s service departments, and building strong partnerships with Grambling State University and Lincoln Preparatory Charter School (Lincoln Prep).

During John’s time on the council, his priority was to focus on improving safety measures for Grambling’s citizens and employees. He’s proud of the fact that he was instrumental in introducing and delivering a free mass emergency communication system, named Civic Ready, which informs citizens of weather, public safety and service alerts along with city departmental communications. Some other accomplishments he is proud of relate to deliverable safety measures in the city, to include:

- 1) spearheading the installation of flashing beacon school radar signs near Lincoln Prep,
- 2) scheduling of semiannually street signs which were installed throughout the city,
- 3) partnering with Hills Tire Service in order to properly dispose of waste tires found alongside city streets or ditches,
- 4) adding additional Personal Protective Equipment for the Public Works employees, along with awareness and education sessions,
- 5) overseeing a heat stress prevention workshop with Public Work employees, with emphasis on staying



John Brown

- safe while working in the heat,
 - 6) partnering with Police Jury Members in initiating and executing the successful street striping of two main thoroughfares (i.e. Stadium Drive and south Main Street),
 - 7) amending existing ordinance titled accumulation of overgrown grass, weeds and vines, and
 - 8) being instrumental in supporting the police department in filling open positions and adding additional police officers to support Grambling’s population.
- John is a Team Player and proud of the fact that he’s been able to diligently work

with Mayor A. Bradley and current council members on many of their initiatives, to include : Mayor Pro Tempore Deloris Smith (Listening Post), Councilman Lewis (Fire department hiring and improvements), Councilwoman Giles (Juneteenth committee), Councilwoman Ponton (Keep Louisiana Beautiful Project) and Mayor A. Bradley (ten year master plan, hiring of city employees, litter control staffing, etc.). John is committed to continuing to build a great working relationship with the Police Jury and neighboring government officials.

If re-elected, John has some unfinished business and/or opportunities that he would strive to see come into fruition. These include continuing to:

- 1) assist in attracting more businesses,
- 2) push for additional street maintenance improvements,
- 3) work to acquire a mosquito abatement program,
- 4) push for continuous improvements on Grambling’s city park, and
- 5) advocate for the hiring of qualified candidates for the service departments. He commits to always listening while keeping an open mind about citizen concerns and questions. John pledges that his services will always be done with honesty and transparency, and that he will continue to provide immediate feedback to the citizens.

Brown and his wife, JoAnn, have two sons and five grandchildren.

“Working Together for A Positive Change”

Announcements

Public hearing scheduled at Lincoln Prep Monday

Executive Director Rashid Young and the Grambling High Foundation Board of Directors have called a public hearing for inspection of its 2026-27 fiscal year budget, to comply with public notice requirements Monday, Sept. 28, at 4 p.m. at the school.

The public is allowed to attend and inspect the budget.

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 28. For more information,

please contact Collins at 832 891-7488.

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 in Minden from noon until 3 p.m.

There will be fun and eating for everyone during the organization’s main fund raiser activity.

NAACP will hold monthly meetings on third Thursday

The Grambling Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) #6094-B 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 October 15.

The Branch will hold election of its officers on Thursday, Nov. 19, from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. electronically. Members are asked to make sure their contact information is current. If necessary, call or text Grace Tatem at 318-680-7679.

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 con-

tact K. Bass at 318- 251-5134 or email her at kyleighbass@agcenter.lsu.edu.

Grambling Water Department sends out residential warning

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.

Andrew Young From Page 1

Young, Holder and Figures shared a conversation about civil rights Friday at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s 55th annual legislative conference in Washington, D.C.

A New Orleans native, Young’s work in voting rights began as an elementary student. He recalled that students were instructed to write a letter to their parents on why they needed to vote.

“You wrote to your own parents and took the letter home and gave it to your parents about why they should vote,” he said. “Even in segregation, we were being taught the struggle.”

Although he had studied Gandhi as a young man, he said his father taught him how to endure racism, a lesson that carried him through his work in the movement.

“My daddy said, ‘Look, you’re never going to be able to be big enough to beat everybody, but you can out-think anybody,’” Young said. “He said, ‘Don’t get mad. Get smart. If you lose your temper in a fight, you lose the fight. Your mind is the most valuable weapon you have, and if you get emotional, you cut your mind off.’ And so that’s the way I was raised.”

Young said he first met King at Talladega College in

Alabama in the late 1950s. Young was studying at Hartford Theological Seminary in Marion where he would meet his first wife, Jean Childs Young. “We were both newly married, and we talked more about our baby daughters than we did about civil rights, and we talked about growing up,” he said.

The Youngs moved to Atlanta in 1961, where he joined the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), eventually becoming its executive director and working alongside King.

In 1972, Young made history when he was elected to Congress as the first Black representative from Georgia since reconstruction. Five years later, President Jimmy Carter appointed him ambassador to the United Nations. Young also served two terms as Atlanta mayor and would work to bring the Olympics to the city in 1996.

Young is credited with helping draft the landmark Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act, barring racial discrimination.

Holder, a New York native, was 14 when Congress passed the Voting Rights Act in 1965 and acknowledged it was the impetus for his work as an attorney.

“I lived through the struggles, observing them from New York on television, to

see the passage of the Voting Rights Act, to see the flowering of Black political power in the South and to see attempts to undo that history,” said Holder, who became the first Black U.S. attorney general under President Barack Obama, the first Black president.

“As I matured and to be able to be in these positions, it became my determination that not on my watch would we see a retrenchment, to go back to the America that existed before the great work that Ambassador Young and all those great heroes, heroines did before me,” Holder said.

But civil rights advocates have lamented decisions by the Supreme Court, in *Shelby County v. Holder* in 2013 and the *Callais* decision in April, that they say have gutted the Voting Rights Act.

Holder connected some of the past struggles to what the Trump administration is pursuing, citing the Iran war and attempts to add President Donald Trump’s name to the Kennedy Center. He said those running the country have “intellectual deficits.”

Watching the conversation at his first Congressional Black Caucus conference, James Fields IV, 23, of Birmingham, Ala., said the Young panel was his favorite “because it had a mixture of

knowledge.”

“I’m learning from their footsteps, and also I think being able to hear their mistakes allows us the opportunity to know what we should and should not do as young people,” said Fields, who serves as the Alabama SDEC District 52 representative. “I’m just blessed and I’m honored.”

This story was originally produced by Maryland Mat-

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CHURCH NEWS

3 Things I Learned Growing Up in the Black Church

By Shar Walker

Itchy pantyhose. Elaborate hats. Clapping tambourines. Seasoned saints giving me more peppermints than I knew what to do with.

Those are some of my earliest memories of church. I grew up in a predominantly African-American Baptist church, which had its own traditions, songs, and sayings. “He’s an On Time God” was sung valiantly (often by my father). Every testimony began, “First giving honor to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

I have come to respect and cherish the traditional black church that laid the foundation of my faith in Jesus. All cultural manifestations of Christ’s church have faults and blind spots, of course, but I’m grateful for at least three lessons I learned from the church I was raised in: a reverence for God, an encouragement to walk with him through pain and suffering, and the importance of community.

1. **Reverence for God**
- The historically black church places a high value on the holiness and transcendence of God. I remember the reverence of communion and the humility required to partake of the elements, as well as the sacredness of baptism and the significance of identifying with God and his people. Children dared not run across the altar where God’s Word was proclaimed, since such locations had a sacredness about them. And while clothing was much debated in our house, my parents insisted we dress up for church because it was a holy day of the week, set apart for worship and rest.
2. **Encouragement to Trust God through Pain**
- The African-American church is a miracle. My people clung to the same God my people were taught had made them less than human. The black church was birthed from a place of marginalization and hardship. From its foundations it has known dark times, but it has also



been given the privilege of experiencing God as strength and shield (Ps. 28:7).

I wondered how the members of my church endured during seasons of burying children, unfaithful spouses, injustice in their communities, and unfair systems they were fighting against. I watched these men and women show deep resolve and alacrity to follow God when reason whispered to not even try.

It was as if, in a healthy way, suffering was expected. There was a palpable understanding that we live in a fallen and fractured world—and that the greatest days for the Christian are always ahead. So there was no sense in trying too hard to make this earth their home. That would be

like going to a hotel, unpacking your clothes, putting them in drawers, and then hanging up pictures. No, these saints were living for another world. They were “looking forward to a city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Heb. 11:10). This has challenged me to expect hardship of various kinds (1 Peter 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:12) and to not suffer without hope (1 Thess. 4:13).

Life will present difficult situations, but God is an ever-present help, and we have not been called to run this race alone.

3. **Importance of Community**

It’s common for minority groups to experience a “collective consciousness.” There’s just an undeniable sense that we need each other.

I watched as my parents opened our home to families who needed a place to live. When a member’s close relative died, it was customary for other church members to attend the funeral, even if it meant driving hours to do so. When my own grandmother passed, I remember seeing leaders from my church in the pews, mourning with us. I observed Romans 12:15 being lived out. Though the physical, emotional, and monetary needs were often great, God provided for his people through his people.

This is the greatest lesson I learned: we need one another. It would be impossible to walk faithfully with the Lord alone. He instructs us to do good to one another (Gal. 6:9), to bear with one another (Eph. 4:2), and to encourage one another (1 Thess. 5:11). So as we toil and struggle to make it home to glory, may we do so with saints beside us, helping us along the way.

(This is a reprint from the Gospelcoalition.org)

Church Announcements

- Love Chapel Church to hold Family and Friends Day
- The Love Chapel Baptist Church will hold its annual Family and Friends Day service Sunday, September 27, at 2:30 p.m. The church is located on 1525 Sikes St. Ruston and pastored by Reverend Elliott Abney.
- The program will honor Zelda Thompson. The guest Pastor and church will be Rev. James Maddox of Union Baptist Church, Dubach.
- All area churches are invited to join in the service.
- Springhill Church to celebrate Musician and Choir appreciation
- The Springhill Baptist Church will hold its Second Annual Musicians and Choir Appreciation service Sunday, October 4, at 2:30 p.m. The church is located on 727

- Dicks Store Rd. Ruston and pastored by Reverend Eric Caldwell.
- Three guest choirs will serve, including Pastor Steven Harris Senior and the Abundant International Ministry Choir; James Arnold and the St. Peter MBC Choir; as well as Steven Hoof and the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church Choir.
- The theme: “Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth: Shout and sing for joy and sing praises.” Psalms 98:4 3:15. Pastor Eric Caldwell will serve as master of ceremony.
- 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, October 12. The meeting is spearheaded by Patrick Jefferson, former state representative, along with invited speakers. Every man is invited to come and worship.
- 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/mission 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 channel, 146 King St. Church of Christ. Wednesday night Bible study begins at 7 p.m. The Zoom ID is 9744743562 and the church may be contact at 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
- Gumsspring**, 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. lifepoin-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** 901Martin Luther King Dr. Ruston.
- Lifechurch.LA**, 3000 S. Vienna St., Ruston
- LifePoint Church of Ruston**, 1018 S. Vienna St., Ruston
- Living Water Full Gospel Church**,149 Fairgrounds Rd., Ruston
- Miracle Temple COGIC**, 1405 S. Farmerville, Ruston
- New Living Word Ministry**, 1900 Barnett Springs Rd. Ruston
- New Testament Church at Grambling Inc.**, 508 Main St., Grambling
- Praise Temple**, Ramada Inn, 107 Love Ave., Ruston
- St. Paul Lutheran**, 504 Tech Drive, Ruston
- The Bridge Community Church**, North Campus, 2301 N. Trenton, Ruston
- Triumph The Church and Kingdom of God in Christ**, Hwy. 3061 E. Tenn. Rd., Ruston
- United Faith Tabernacle Ministries & Prayer Center**, 303 Cherry St., Bernice,
- Upon the Rock Outreach Center**, 513 E. Texas Ave., Ruston

HEALTH & WELLNESS



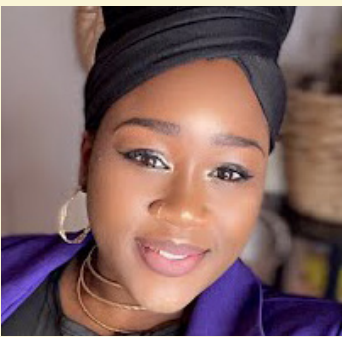
CHARMING’S CORNER

Everybody Can’t Go Where You’re Going

By Charming Davis

Growth changes your relationships. That’s one of the parts nobody really prepares you for. You start healing, changing your habits, setting boundaries, communicating differently and becoming more intentional. Suddenly, relationships that once felt comfortable start feeling unfamiliar. It doesn’t always mean somebody became a bad person. Sometimes you’ve simply grown in different directions. Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NLT) says, “For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.” That includes relationships.

Some people are lifetime people. Some are seasonal. Some arrive to teach us something. Some help us survive a chapter. Some walk beside us until the road naturally divides. The problem comes when we try to force expired relationships into current assignments. Energy healing often involves becoming conscious of what we’re carrying emotionally. Sometimes we are carrying guilt, resentment, old promises, expectations or identities that no longer belong to who we are becoming. Release doesn’t always require anger. You don’t have to create a villain just because something ended.



Charming Davis

Sometimes the healthiest spiritual response is simply gratitude. Thank you for what you taught me. Thank you for what we experienced. And thank God for where I’m going next. Isaiah 43:19 (NLT) says, “For I am about to do some-

thing new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?” It’s difficult to embrace something new while gripping the old with both hands. And sometimes the relationship you’re being asked to release isn’t even with another person. Maybe you’re outgrowing an old version of yourself. The people-pleaser. The rescuer. The person who stayed silent to keep everybody comfortable. The person who believed love required self-abandonment. Healing can feel strange because your new identity hasn’t completely become familiar yet.

Give yourself grace. Pray for discernment. Clear your emotional space. Pay attention to your energy. Let relationships evolve naturally without forcing closeness or separation. Everybody doesn’t have to understand your evolution. Your responsibility is to continue becoming who God is calling you to become. Naturally Charming Universe Holistic Wellness Center offers energy healing, spiritual counseling, clarity sessions and distant healing sessions to support intentional healing and personal transformation. Holistic and spiritual wellness products are also available online. <https://linktr.ee/naturally-charminguniverse>

The Effects of Chronic Illness on Mental Health

By Jeannetta S. Jones

Chronic illness is a disease that a person may need to manage for the rest of their life. Chronic health conditions can develop as people age, and some parts of the body may change or weaken over time. Receiving a diagnosis and living with a chronic illness can lead to emotional distress, anxiety, depression, and added financial strain. Chronic illness can affect mental health, quality of life, and a person’s ability to cope. The emotional toll of living with chronic illness Receiving a chronic illness diagnosis can cause many emotions, including shock, fear, sadness, or anger. Shock may be especially strong when there is no family history of the condition. The emotional toll often comes from adjusting to a new normal, because chronic illness can affect daily routines. A person may need to change their diet, carry medication, or make other lifestyle adjustments. Some individuals may also feel embarrassed about the diagnosis or worry about being judged by others. How to manage mental strain To cope with chronic illness and mental health concerns, it is important to learn strategies that support both physical and emotional well-being. According to research, the following approaches can help manage the mental strain of living with a chronic disease:

- Reduce stress: When possible, look for areas of your life where you can lower stress.
- Connect with loved ones: Reach out to family and friends for emotional support.
- Get moving: Moving your body or exercising can help you cope. Physical activity may help ease pain, boost chemicals in the brain that support well-being, and distract your mind from worries.
- Make an action plan: Living with a



Jeannetta S. Jones

chronic illness can make a person feel as though they have little control over their life. Creating a plan can help restore a sense of control and support mental health.

- Practice mindfulness: This can include yoga, deep breathing exercises, and meditation.
- Seek professional help: Working with a mental health professional can help you manage the emotional effects of chronic illness.

If you have been diagnosed with a chronic illness, remember that you are not alone. Research suggests that approximately 129 million people live with chronic illnesses. Chronic illness and mental health conditions often go hand in hand. Treating one without addressing the other can limit recovery and having either condition may increase the risk of developing the other. When dealing with a long-term illness, you might think that things will never get better and each condition makes it harder to stay afloat. Symptoms of depression in chronic illness patients

- Persistent sadness
- Feelings of hopelessness/pessimism
- Changes in appetite (overeating or not eating enough)
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fatigue or decreased energy
- Loss of interest in activities

Remember, it is okay not to be okay. Living with a chronic illness is difficult, and feelings of sadness or anger are normal. The important thing is to acknowledge these emotions rather than suppress them. Bottling them up can make things worse over time and may lead to an emotional outburst later. For more information, visit www.nami.org, www.webmd.org, MayoClinic.org, and www.helpguide.org. Jeannetta Stephens-Jones, Ed.D., retired educational diagnostician, speech pathologist, and president of the NAMI Ruston Board of Directors. Contact her at jjones_79aka@yahoo.com.

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GSU to Celebrate World Famed Tiger Marching Band Centennial with Gala & Concert

Once-in-a-century celebration will honor 100 years of sound, showmanship, tradition, and cultural impact

GRAMBLING, La. — Grambling State University will honor a century of sound, showmanship, and cultural impact as the World Famed Tiger Marching Band celebrates its 100th anniversary with the World Famed Tiger Marching Band Centennial Gala & Concert on Thursday, October 1, 2026, at the Frederick C. Hobdy Assembly Center on the campus of Grambling State University. The evening will begin with

a VIP Reception at 6 p.m., followed by the general program at 7:30 p.m.

The milestone celebration will bring together alumni, students, former band members, University leaders, supporters, and friends of the World Famed for an unforgettable evening honoring one of Grambling State University's most treasured traditions.

Founded in 1926, the World Famed Tiger Marching Band began with a vision to create a group of marching musicians at the institution now known as Grambling State University. What started with 17 instruments and a determined group of students has grown

into one of the most celebrated collegiate marching bands in the nation, known for its powerful sound, precision, showmanship, and unmistakable Tiger pride.

"As we celebrate 100 years of the World Famed Tiger Marching Band, we are honoring generations of students, directors, arrangers, musicians, alumni, and supporters who built and sustained a standard recognized around the world," said Dr. Nikole Roebuck, Director of Bands. "This Centennial Gala & Concert is a moment to celebrate our history, uplift those who helped carry this legacy forward, and inspire the next generation of World Famed

musicians."

The Centennial Gala & Concert will feature music, special recognitions, fellowship, and a special guest performance, with the featured artist to be announced at a later date. More than an evening of celebration, the event will help support the future of the World Famed Tiger Marching Band and sustain the next century of musicianship, leadership, performance, and cultural impact.

The celebration comes during Grambling State University's historic Multiversity year, honoring 125 years of academic excellence, 100 years of Tiger Athletics, and 100 years of the World Famed Tiger March-

ing Band.

"For a century, the World Famed Tiger Marching Band has carried the sound, pride, and spirit of Grambling State University to audiences across the nation and around the world," said President Martin Lemelle, Jr. "This centennial celebration is an opportunity to honor those who helped build this extraordinary legacy while celebrating the students and leaders who continue to move the tradition forward."

Tickets and sponsorship opportunities for the World Famed Tiger Marching Band Centennial Gala & Concert are available at gram.edu/world-famed-gala.



History of Grambling's World Famed Tiger Marching Band

By Lena W. Claybon

Long before the bright lights, roaring stadiums, Super Bowl appearances and international performances, there were 17 instruments, a determined group of students and a vision.

In 1926, Grambling State University—then a small school in rural North Louisiana—didn't have a marching band. There wasn't even a music department.

That changed when President Charles P. Adams asked a young faculty member named Ralph Waldo Emerson Jones to organize a group of student musicians.

Jones, who would later become the legendary president of Grambling and affectionately known as "Prez," secured 17 instruments from Sears and Roebuck and began teaching students who, in many cases, knew little about reading music.

From those humble beginnings came what would eventually become one of the most recognizable collegiate marching bands in America—the World Famed Tiger Marching Band.

Now, 100 years later, the band stands as much more than a university organization. It has become part of the identity of Grambling State University and a symbol of Black collegiate excellence recognized around the world.



1950's Tiger Marching band

Building a Band

Those first years bore little resemblance to the elaborate performances audiences would later associate with Grambling.

The fledgling musicians

learned their craft and eventually moved from concert chairs onto the football field. In those early days, some students actually played both in the band and on the football team.

When a musician was injured playing football, Jones himself was known to step in and play his part.

By the 1930s, the band was performing concerts and dances in neighboring communities.

As the program grew, Jones recognized that it needed full-time leadership. A.D. "Sarge" King was hired, followed by J.S. "Pop" Lee and interim director Sheldon Booth.

Then, in 1952, Conrad Hutchinson Jr. arrived at Grambling.

His goal was ambitious: make Grambling's marching band the "best band in the land." Under Hutchinson's demanding leadership, musicians were molded into precision marchers and entertainers. Discipline, musicianship, showmanship and relentless preparation became hallmarks of the Grambling

sound and style.

The transformation would eventually take Grambling far beyond North Louisiana.

The World Begins to Take Notice

One of the band's major breakthroughs came in 1964 when Grambling performed at halftime of the American Football League championship game in San Diego.

Transportation wasn't provided, so President Jones reportedly paid for chartered buses himself.

It proved to be quite an investment.

The performance generated national attention and invitations began arriving from across the country. The band earned another nickname: "The Band That Never Gets Tired." Soon, Grambling wasn't simply traveling across America. It was going around the world.

A 15-member entertainment group called the "Mixed Notes" performed for USO audiences in places including Panama, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Korea, the Philippines and the Bahamas.

Then came one of the biggest stages in sports.

In 1967, Grambling performed during the inaugural Super Bowl at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Eight years later, the Ti-

gers returned to the Super Bowl stage, performing at Super Bowl IX in New Orleans. Grambling had gone from playing before small crowds in rural Louisiana to entertaining millions.

Taking Grambling Around the World

The band's growing reputation also opened doors internationally.

In January 1972, approximately 150 members traveled to Monrovia, Liberia, for the inauguration of President William R. Tolbert.

Over 10 days, Grambling musicians performed at more than a dozen functions before audiences that included dignitaries representing scores of countries. Later that year, the Tigers traveled to Honolulu, Hawaii. In 1976, they performed in Tokyo for the first Pioneer Bowl, beginning a relationship with Japan that would bring them back for additional performances and festivals.

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merman, his contact information is zimmermank@gram.edu or 318-274-2732.

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SPORTS

Grambling, Alcorn Set for Homecoming Showdown

Staff Report

When Grambling State takes the field for Homecoming on October 3, the Tigers won't just be playing before one of their biggest crowds of the season. They'll be facing a familiar SWAC West rival that has had their number in recent years.

Grambling welcomes Alcorn State to Eddie G. Robinson Memorial Stadium for a 2 p.m. kickoff in a matchup that could have implications in the Southwestern Athletic Conference West Division race.

As of September 20, Grambling is 2-1 overall and has yet to play a SWAC opponent. Alcorn entered the weekend 2-1 overall and 1-0 in conference play.

The Tigers opened the season impressively, defeating Clark Atlanta 49-7 and Central State 48-26 before stepping up in competition against Big 12 opponent TCU, which handed Grambling a 63-7 loss. The Tigers had a bye this weekend and will face defending SWAC champion Prairie View A&M in the State Fair Classic September 26 before returning home for Homecoming.

Alcorn opened with a 56-7 victory over Miles College, followed by a 49-3 loss to Southern Miss. The Braves then survived a 53-51 double-overtime thriller

against Arkansas-Pine Bluff to open SWAC play.

A Rivalry With History

Grambling and Alcorn are certainly no strangers.

The schools' football history stretches back decades, with Grambling holding a substantial advantage in the overall series. Grambling Athletics listed the Tigers as leading the all-time series 47-25-3 entering the teams' 2024 meeting.

Recent history, however, has favored the Braves.

Alcorn has won the last three meetings, including a 27-16 victory in Lorman last season. The Braves edged Grambling 17-15 in 2024 and 25-24 in 2023.

Before Alcorn's current streak, Grambling delivered one of the most decisive victories in the recent series, defeating the Braves 35-6 at Eddie G. Robinson Memorial Stadium in 2022.

Over the meetings recorded by Grambling Athletics since 2012, the Tigers hold an 8-7 advantage. More importantly for this year's matchup, Grambling has been particularly successful against Alcorn at home, posting a 5-1 record in Grambling during that period.

That could make Homecoming location more than just a festive backdrop.

Two Teams With Something to Prove

Alcorn currently has



the early advantage in the SWAC West because of its conference victory over Arkansas-Pine Bluff. Grambling enters its September 26 matchup against Prairie View A&M at 0-0 in conference play.

Preseason projections also suggested there may not be much separating these teams. Stats Perform projected Grambling third in the SWAC West and Alcorn fourth, while its Opta model projected 3.7 wins for Grambling and 3.9 for Alcorn.

Alcorn has shown that it can put points on the

board, scoring 56 against Miles and 53 against Arkansas-Pine Bluff. But the Braves have also shown defensive vulnerabilities, surrendering 49 points to Southern Miss and 51 to Arkansas-Pine Bluff.

Grambling has been similarly difficult to evaluate because of the dramatic difference in its competition. The Tigers overwhelmed Clark Atlanta and Central State, scoring a combined 97 points, before managing just seven against TCU.

That makes Grambling's September 26

State Fair Classic against Prairie View particularly important. Facing the defending SWAC champion should provide a much clearer indication of where the Tigers stand against conference competition.

Who Has the Edge?

On paper, this looks like a close matchup.

Alcorn has recent history on its side, having won three consecutive games against Grambling, including two decided by three points or fewer.

Grambling, however, has history of another

kind working in its favor — home field.

The Tigers are 5-1 at home against Alcorn in meetings recorded since 2012, and this time they'll have the added atmosphere of a Homecoming crowd at Eddie G. Robinson Memorial Stadium.

Both teams have also demonstrated the ability to score against comparable competition while showing vulnerabilities when facing stronger opponents.

That creates an intriguing Homecoming storyline:

Recent history says Alcorn. Home-field history says Grambling.

With the information available now, the numbers suggest a game that could go down to the fourth quarter. Grambling's strong home history against the Braves and the Homecoming setting give the Tigers some favorable factors, while Alcorn's three-game winning streak in the series gives the Braves reason for confidence.

Before either team can turn its attention fully to October 3, however, both have important conference games September 26. Grambling faces Prairie View A&M in Dallas, while Alcorn hosts Texas Southern.

The results of those two games could tell us considerably more about what to expect when the Tigers and Braves meet in Grambling for Homecoming.



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That same year, more than a million spectators watched Grambling perform during America's Bicentennial celebration in Washington, D.C., where the Tigers marched in the July Fourth parade and performed at the Washington Monument.

The once-small country band was now unmistakably international.

Becoming a Cultural Institution

Grambling's rise wasn't just about where the band performed. It was about how it performed.

Precision marching, powerful music, dance, athleticism and showmanship turned halftime into an event.

Preparation could be grueling. Band members trained for long hours beginning in August, combining marching, music, conditioning and drills. Hutchinson was known to demand hours of practice for just minutes of performance.

The philosophy was simple: be the best you can be.

That standard produced results.

In 1972, Grambling won an organized "Battle of the Bands" competition in Dallas against several other collegiate bands, taking the overall trophy along with awards for showmanship and

continuity.

The band's sound was preserved on recordings, including the 1972 album *Tiger Time*. Its image reached television audiences through national advertising, including a Coca-Cola commercial filmed in 1981 that identified Grambling as the "No. 1 Band in the Land."

The program also continued evolving visually. Majorettes became part of the organization in the 1950s, and featured twirlers followed. Women had been musicians in Grambling's earliest band, and in 1977 female performers again became an integral part of the organization, including the addition of the Orchesis dancers.

Meanwhile, the band's numbers grew dramatically—from Jones' original 17 musicians to ensembles numbering in the hundreds.

Always a Tiger

Perhaps the greatest measure of the band's legacy, however, isn't found in stadiums, trophies, commercials or international appearances.

It is found in its people.

Generations of students have learned that wearing a Grambling band uniform carries expectations: discipline, preparation, teamwork, excellence and pride.

And graduation doesn't necessarily end that con-

nection.

Band alumni have traditionally returned to Grambling, particularly during Homecoming, when former members once again pick up their instruments and recreate some of the performances of years past.

That enduring bond may help explain why the World Famed is so deeply woven into the fabric of Grambling.

What began in 1926 with 17 instruments and students learning the fundamentals of music became a band that performed in major stadiums across America, represented Grambling overseas, entertained Super Bowl crowds and performed before presidents and international dignitaries.

One hundred years later, the story of the World Famed Tiger Marching Band remains, at its heart, a Grambling story.

It is the story of taking something small and believing it could become something extraordinary.

It is a story of discipline, creativity, opportunity and generations of young people carrying forward what those first 17 musicians began.

From a little country band in North Louisiana to the World Famed Tiger Marching Band.

Seventeen instruments. One hundred years. One extraordinary legacy.



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