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THE GRAMBLING CONNECTION

Volume 2, No. 29
Friday, November 20, 2026 •

VETERANS DAY ISSUE

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

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Rick Gallot Resigns

Former GSU President and University of Louisiana System President for last two years, Rick Gallot, resigned on Friday, November 13, 2026, effective December 1, 2026, following public reports that he owes $350,000 in back federal income taxes.



Rick Gallot

Gallot submitted his resignation during an emergency/special meeting of the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors. He will transition support through December 1 before returning to a faculty assignment.

Reports revealed a federal tax lien/court record indicating $350,000 in unpaid federal income taxes dating back to 2019. Gallot attributed the issue to a former accountant and stated he has been disputing the amount and trying to resolve the issue with the IRS since early 2024.

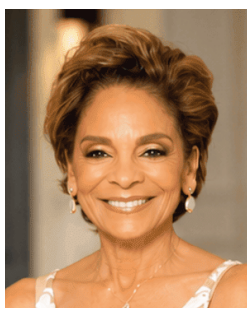
Gallot took office as UL System president in January 2024 after serving for nearly eight years as president of Grambling State University (his alma mater) and previously serving in the Louisiana House and Senate. Gallot is also a Grambling native.

The Board of Supervisors unanimously appointed Louisiana State Superintendent of Education Cade Brumley as the system's new president. Brumley, a graduate of Northwestern State University, has been Louisiana's State Superintendent of Education since 2020.

Jasmine Guy to Deliver Fall 2026 Commencement Address at GSU

GRAMBLING, La. — Grambling State University will welcome Emmy Award-winning actress, director, singer and author Jasmine Guy as the commencement speaker for its Fall 2026 Commencement on Friday, December 4, at 10 a.m. in the Fredrick C. Hobdy Assembly Center.

Guy is widely known for her iconic portrayal of Whitley Gilbert on the groundbreaking television series A Different World, a role that helped define one of television's most enduring portrayals of life at a historically Black college. She now reprises the role in Netflix's new A Different World sequel series, which returned audiences to Hillman College this fall with a new generation of students.



Jasmine Guy

In 2024, Guy received the Emmy Award for Outstanding Actress in a Short Form Comedy or Drama Series for her performance as Barbara Baldwin in Chronicles of Jessica Wu.

"Jasmine Guy's career is a powerful example of excellence, versatility and purpose," said Grambling State University President Martin Lemelle, Jr. "Her work shapes culture and inspires generations, including students and graduates across the HBCU community. We are honored to welcome her to Grambling State as we celebrate the Fall Class of 2026 and the next chapter in their journeys."

"I grew up in the shadow of Morehouse College and have admired Grambling State from afar for many years as one of our most revered and celebrated HBCUs," Guy said. "I am both honored and excited to be speaking at this fall's commencement, and hopefully I'll get to hear that fabulous World Famed Tiger Marching Band. Geaux Tigers!"

Guy's career spans television, film, Broadway, music, writing and directing. Her television and film credits include Grey's Anatomy, The Vampire Diaries, The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, School Daze and Harlem Nights. Her Broadway career includes performances in Grease, The Wiz and Chicago.

See Jasmine Page 2

The Blue Wave: Will Louisiana Politics Change or Remain Business as Usual?



By Lena W. Claybon

While Democrats swept races across the country in the November 3 midterm elections, Louisiana remained largely Republican. But beneath the election results, there are signs that the state's political landscape may be changing. An unexpectedly close U.S. Senate race, the looming loss of two powerful congressional leadership positions and renewed interest in Louisiana from national political organizations are raising questions about what comes next. Will Louisiana continue down its familiar political path, or could the 2026 elections mark the beginning of a shift?

See The Blue Wave: Page 2

Beyond Veterans Day: Lincoln Parish NAACP Honors Service, Sacrifice and Legacy

By Keith Jackson



Veterans Event - Ruston

RUSTON, La. — At 107 years old, World War II veteran Sam Mattox was among those honored Monday as the Lincoln Parish Branch of the NAACP brought community members together for a Veterans Day celebration centered on service, sacrifice and remembrance.

The organization's Veterans Day Roll Call of Honor Coffee & Tea Brunch, held Nov. 9 at the Ruston Sports Complex's Origin Bank Building, recognized local veterans while encouraging the community to extend its appreciation beyond a single holiday.

Mattox, a former U.S. Army corporal recognized as Louisiana's oldest living World War II veteran, attended the gathering as its special honoree. His recognition served as a reminder of the generations of Americans whose military service continues to shape the nation's history.

"When you fight for us, we fight for you," said Nakisha R. Evans, who led the organization of the event.

See Beyond Page 2

OPINION

The Wisdom Outside the Graduation Procession Deserves a Seat

By Douglas Vandergraph

In a community shaped by education, graduations rightly attract attention. Students have worked, families have sacrificed, and teachers have often given far more of themselves than a ceremony can name. The music, photographs, and congratulations mark a meaningful achievement. Yet the value of learning should not stop at the end of the procession.

Grambling's identity is closely linked to Grambling State University, but the city and Lincoln Parish also contain people whose stories of learning unfolded in kitchens, workplaces, churches, and neighborhoods. Some discovered a new skill long after they thought school was behind them. Some taught children without ever receiving a degree. Others returned to education after setbacks that the public never saw.

If a community celebrates learning only when it is accompanied by a formal certificate, it risks overlooking the knowledge that sustains daily life.

Jesus was known for teaching people who were not necessarily the most celebrated voices in a room. His example invites us to think differently about who is allowed to ask questions and whose experience counts. In a faith-centered view of dignity, the older neighbor who has practiced a craft for decades and the student opening a textbook for the first time are not competing for worth. Both are people whose gifts matter.

That conviction can guide small, practical choices. Invite older residents to tell their stories without reducing their lives to nostalgia. Let students support digital literacy efforts while learning from the people they help. Create opportunities for young people to ask questions of local business owners, veterans, caregivers, and community organizers. Make room for adults who want to learn something new without treating their curiosity as an embarrassment.

A community that values education also needs patience. Not everyone learns at the same speed. Not everyone can afford the same tools or hours away from work. A welcoming lesson begins by asking what people already know and what they hope to do, not by pointing out where they have fallen behind.

There is no need to lessen the pride of students or graduates to broaden the celebration. Their accomplishments become even more meaningful when a community sees learning as a shared responsibility rather than a narrow credential.

Grambling can celebrate its classrooms and still remember the wisdom beyond them. The best tribute to a graduation procession is a city where curiosity, guidance, and opportunity remain available to the people watching from the sidewalk.

POTTER MOTIVATION

Look Again - Your Mistake May Be Your Miracle

By Rusty Potter

I have been recovering from the flu, and let me tell you – it was nothing nice. I've had the flu before but this time, it knocked me down and reminded me how much we take our health for granted. When you feel good, you get up, go to work, and you keep moving. But when sickness takes your energy away, you appreciate every day that you feel strong.

After going through this, I'm taking my health way more seriously and proactively staying on top of things including taking my flu shot early next year!

Sometimes experience teaches us lessons that advice never could.

That brings me to Alexander Fleming. Pull up a chair. I'm about to tell you who he was.

Alexander Fleming was a Scottish scientist and physician whose work would eventually change the world of medicine.

In 1928, Fleming was studying bacteria in his laboratory when something unexpected happened. One of his Petri dishes became contaminated with mold. It could have been considered a mistake - something to throw away and forget.

But Fleming looked again.

He noticed something unusual. The bacteria around the mold were being destroyed.

That observation eventually



Rusty Potter

led to the discovery of penicillin, one of the most important medical breakthroughs in history.

Think about it.

What looked like a mistake became a medical breakthrough.

Life can be that way.

Maybe you lost a job you thought you needed. Maybe a relationship ended. Maybe you made a decision you wish you could change. Maybe you are going through a difficult season right now and wondering, "Why me?"

Before you throw away that chapter of your life, look again.

Disappointments often times holds lessons. The setback may hold wisdom. There may be a new direction hidden inside the situation you didn't choose.

Romans 8:28 reminds us that God can work all things together for good for those who love Him.

It doesn't say everything that happens is good. It says God can take what happened and work it together for good.

Don't be too quick to call your situation a failure.

Alexander Fleming didn't throw away that Petri dish.

He looked again.

And what appeared to be a mistake became a breakthrough.

You may need to look again at your own situation.

Your setback may be setting you up. Your disappointment may be redirecting you. And what you thought was a mistake may be the beginning of something you never imagined.

Sometimes, you just have to look again.

The Blue Wave From Page 1

Nationally, Democrats won control of both the U.S. House and Senate, bringing an end to Republican control of Congress. In Louisiana, however, Republican Julia Letlow defeated Democrat Jamie Davis in the U.S. Senate race, receiving 50.9% of the vote compared to Davis' 49.1%.

While Letlow's victory kept the Senate seat in Republican hands, the narrow margin surprised political observers. Davis, a farmer from Tensas Parish who received little support from national Democratic organizations, came within approximately 26,000 votes of winning the statewide race.

According to the Louisiana Illuminator, Davis' performance was the strongest showing by a Democrat in a Louisiana U.S. Senate race since former Sen. Mary Landrieu's reelection in 2008. His campaign, which emphasized affordability and direct voter engagement, has given state Democrats renewed hope that Louisiana may be more politically competitive than previously believed.

Meanwhile, Louisiana voters reelected Republican Congressmen Mike Johnson, Steve Scalise and Clay Higgins, along with Democratic Congressman Troy Carter. Two remaining congressional races, in the 5th and 6th Districts, will be decided in December 12 runoff elections.

Louisiana Loses Political Power in Washington

One of the most immediate consequences of the Blue Wave is the shift in Louisiana's congressional influence.

For the past several years, Louisiana has enjoyed an unusually powerful position in Washington, with Mike Johnson serving as Speaker of the House and Steve Scalise as House Majority Leader.

That will change when Democrats take control of Congress in January. Johnson has announced he will not seek the Republican minority leader position, while Scalise lost his bid for the job to Ohio Congressman Jim Jordan in a November 10 leadership election.

The loss of those leadership positions means Louisiana will no longer have two of its congressional representatives occupying the highest levels of House leadership.

On the Democratic side, Congressman Troy Carter is seeking to become chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, potentially giving Louisiana another avenue of influence in Washington.

Will Anything Change in Baton Rouge?

While the political balance is shifting in Washington, Louisiana's state government remains firmly under Republican control.

Gov. Jeff Landry continues to lead the state, and Republicans maintain substantial majorities in both chambers of the Louisiana Legislature. The November elections did not change that balance of power.

That means major changes to state policies concerning education, taxes, healthcare and other issues are unlikely to occur simply because Democrats gained control of Congress.

However, federal policy changes could still have an impact on Louisiana residents.

Congressional Democrats have identified healthcare affordability, Medicaid funding and Affordable Care Act subsidies among their priorities when they take office in January. They will also gain control of congressional committees responsible for federal spending and oversight.

Those decisions could have implications for Louisiana's healthcare system, educational institutions, infrastructure projects and federal assistance programs.

Still, Democratic control of Congress does not guarantee that proposed legislation will become law. President Donald Trump retains veto authority, and many major bills will require bipartisan cooperation.

The Bigger Question: What Happens in 2027?

Perhaps the most significant political implications for Louisiana will emerge in next year's statewide elections, when Gov. Landry and other state officials face voters.

Following Davis' narrow Senate defeat, several prominent Democrats have suggested the results could provide momentum for a more competitive gubernatorial race.

Former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu told Axios that Davis' showing demonstrates an opportunity for Democrats in Louisiana. Davis himself has not ruled out entering the 2027 governor's race.

Gov. Landry, however, has publicly expressed confidence in his reelection prospects and says he welcomes the opportunity to defend his administration's record.

Both political parties appear to be paying attention to the Senate results. According to a November 12 WAFB report, national Republican and Democratic organizations have committed additional resources to Louisiana's upcoming congressional runoff elections.

Democratic leaders see an opportunity to build on their increased voter participation, while Republican leaders are emphasizing stronger grassroots organizing and voter outreach.

Whether those efforts signal a lasting political shift remains uncertain. A close election does not necessarily mean Louisiana voters are abandoning their traditional party preferences, and future elections will depend on candidates, voter turnout and the issues dominating those campaigns.

Beyond From Page 1

The program featured a Roll Call of Honor, prayers, remembrance and remarks, with veterans also receiving gift bags during the brunch. Pastor Terrance Flucus of Mays Chapel CME served as master of ceremonies.

The gathering also drew local political and community figures, including Mike Smith, a candidate in the Ruston City Court judge runoff; Troy Brooks Sr., newly elected to the Lincoln Parish Police Jury's District 9 seat; and Phillip Ellis, newly elected judge of the 3rd Judicial District Court. Evans was also a candidate for the District 9 Police Jury seat in the recent election.

For Evans, the event was deeply personal. Her family has a multigenerational history of military service, including her father, grandfathers, uncles and other relatives.

She recalled the joy of welcoming family members home from military service and the memories made during their visits, experiences she credits with helping shape her commitment to community service.

However, Evans said recognizing veterans must also mean addressing the challenges they continue to face, particularly in health care and housing. "I think as a whole, if they fought for us, we definitely need to start back fighting for them," Evans said.

Victoria Kent, a member of the Lincoln Parish NAACP, said the celebration represented an opportunity to bring community members together while reminding veterans that their contributions have not been forgotten.

She also highlighted the branch's ongoing community involvement, including its youth council, which encourages leadership development, voter registration participation and educational opportunities.

For Kent, those initiatives reflect a broader commitment to ensuring the organization remains engaged with the people it serves. "I hope that at bare minimum, that they understand that they are seen, they are loved, they are remembered," Kent said.

As the gathering concluded, Evans emphasized that honoring veterans should remain a continuous responsibility rather than an annual obligation. "November the 11th is always gonna be Veterans Day," Evans said. "But as a community, I want us to always celebrate them. Never let this day die."

Jasmine From Page 1

Guy's forthcoming memoir, A Different Girl, co-written with her daughter, Imani Guy Duckette, will be released February 9, 2027, and is available for preorder wherever books are sold.

She is also the author of Evolution of a Revolutionary, which chronicles the life of activist Afeni Shakur, and has toured nationally in the one-woman production Raisin' Cane, exploring the literature, music and cultural landscape of the Harlem Renaissance.

Her connection to higher education and HBCUs has remained an important part of her work. Throughout 2024 and 2025, Guy joined fellow A Different World cast members at HBCUs across the country to celebrate and recognize the contributions of the institutions. In 2025, Ohio Wesleyan University awarded her an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree.

Grambling State University's Fall 2026 Commencement will celebrate graduates as they mark the completion of their academic journeys and prepare for the opportunities ahead.

FALL 2026 COMMENCEMENT

Friday, December 4, 2026

10:00 a.m.

Fredrick C. Hobdy Assembly Center

Additional commencement information and updates are available at gram.edu/graduation.

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COMMUNITY

LINCOLN PREP WINS $6,000 GRANT FOR ITS CNA PROGRAM!

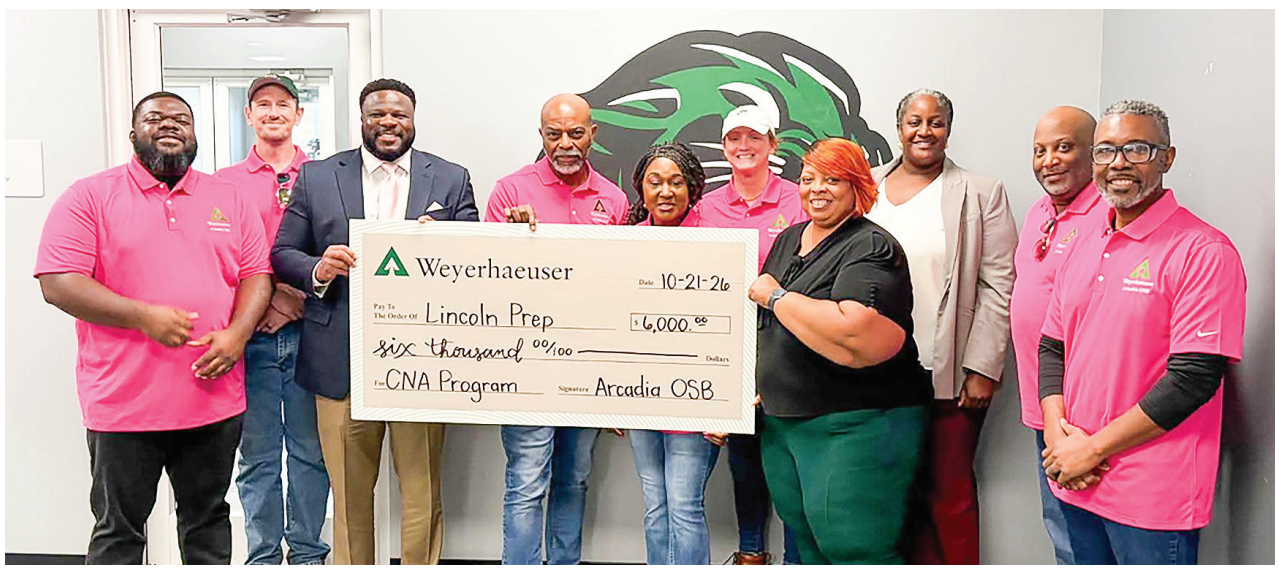
By Shondra Fields

Please join us in celebrating Nurse Shondra Fields, RN, School Nurse and CNA Instructor at Lincoln Preparatory School, for her successful efforts in applying for and securing a $6,000 grant from Weyerhaeuser to support the Lincoln Prep Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Program!

This achievement represents more than a financial award. It reflects Nurse Fields' dedication, hard work, vision, and commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for our students. Through her passion for nursing education and her determination to help students succeed, she continues to invest in the future of healthcare by helping prepare the next generation of nursing assistants.

From working diligently to establish and strengthen the CNA program to providing students with opportunities to gain valuable healthcare knowledge and hands-on skills, Nurse Fields is helping turn dreams into possibilities. This $6,000 award will help support the program's mission of equipping students with the resources and training they need as they take their first steps toward careers in healthcare.

We extend our sincere appreciation to Weyerhaeuser for recognizing the importance of career and technical education and investing in the future of Lincoln Prep students. Your generosity helps open doors, strengthen our program, and empower our future healthcare professionals.



Executive Director Rashid Young and School Nurse Shondra Fields holds grant check while surrounded by staff members

Nurse Fields is not just teaching a class—she is planting seeds, opening doors, and helping shape the future of healthcare, one student at a time!

Congratulations, Nurse Fields! Your hard work is making a difference, and this accomplishment is something to be proud of. Lincoln Prep continues to move forward, preparing students not only for graduation but also for purpose, opportunity, and success!

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, November 23. For more information, please contact Collins at 832 891-7488.

Beautification Project support requested from Community

Dr. Francis Staten is requesting your support in celebrating GSU's Founding Month and Year (November 1901) by participating in Charles P. Adams' Cemetery Beautification Project. The goal is to place 125 plus flowers throughout the cemetery (monuments or tombstones and trees in honor and remembrance of the early contributors and pioneers of Grambling State University and the community. For further information text Dr. Frances Staten: 318-436-9572 or email fstaten877 @gmail,com,

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 November 19.

The Branch will hold election of its officers on Thursday, Nov. 19, from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. electronically. Only members will be contacted by the National office to vote, but the public may attend the teleconference meeting from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. For additional information, contact Grace Tatem, secretary, at 318-680-7679.

Grambling NAACP Youth Council to sponsor raffle

The Grambling Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) #6094-B youth Council will sponsor a $200 gas Raffle card.

The raffle drawing will be held on Monday, Nov. 30 at noon. You do not have to be present to win.

Lincoln Parish NAACP Branch announce applications

The Lincoln Parish Branch of the NAACP (6064) are seeking scholarship applicants. The scholarship applications are available now with a submission application deadline on Tuesday, Dec. 1.

An applicant must be a recent (May 2026) graduate senior from a Lincoln Parish high school and the application must be typed not handwritten according to the committee.

For additional information, contact Rickey Burton or any Lincoln Parish Branch NAACP member.

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 holds '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 citywide 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 nonprofit 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 cancellations must be made two hours prior to pick-up time. For additional information please contact Samantha Dimmer, transportation coordinator 318-251 5138.



To the citizens of Grambling:

Thank you for once again placing your trust in me and re-electing me to serve a second term as your mayor. It is an honor and a privilege to continue working on behalf of the city we proudly call home.

I congratulate the members of the Grambling City Council who were re-elected, and I warmly welcome the newest member of our team. I look forward to working together with a shared commitment to responsible leadership, collaboration, and service to every citizen.

During my administration, Grambling has made significant strides in economic development, citizen engagement, infrastructure improvements, and the delivery of city services. While we celebrate our accomplishments, we recognize that there is still much work ahead. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue that work, address the challenges before us, and pursue new opportunities that will strengthen our city. Together, we will build upon our progress and move our city toward an even stronger and more promising future.

As Thanksgiving approaches, this season offers a special opportunity to reflect upon the many blessings we share. I am especially thankful for the citizens of Grambling, our community partners, and everyone whose dedication and involvement contribute to our city's progress.

On behalf of my family and the City Council, I wish every citizen a safe, peaceful, blessed, and Happy Thanksgiving.

The progress continues, and our best days are still ahead.

Mayor Alvin R. Bradley, Sr.

City of Grambling

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COMMUNITY

In Remembrance

Livingston dedicated her life to education and service

Myrtle Ruth Brown Livingston, affectionately known as "Mert," was born on March 11, 1940, to the union of the last Calvin Brown Sr. and Elizabeth Green Brown. Myrtle was the tenth child of seventeen children.



Myrtle Ruth Brown Livingston

While growing up in the small town of Washington, Louisiana with her siblings around her. Myrtle enjoyed her family, friends and cousins at home and school and at play. She accepted Jesus Christ as personal savior at Shiloh Baptist Church in Washington, Louisiana under the guardianship her uncle, the late Rev. Matthews Antoine.

Myrtle received her early education in St. Landry parish, attending Paul Lawerence Dunbar School in Washington, Louisiana. She continued her education there through her teenage years, proudly graduating with honors of the Paul Lawrence Dunbar Hight School class of 1958.

After graduating from high school, Myrtle enrolled at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana where she earned a Bachelor's of Science in Education and eventually later received a master's degree in education. Myrtle became a member of the Empowering Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Incorporated; she would go on to flourish as a passionate and devoted schoolteacher.

Myrtle accepted a teaching job with St. Landry School system, and for many years was a dedicated teacher at Whiteville Elementary until the closing of the school. She was then transferred to Lincoln High School / Morrow Elementary School. She loved her students and faculty-staff; however, she made the decision to relocate with her family to Gambling, Louisiana.

Myrtle began teaching at the illustrious Alma J. Brown Laboratory School, and from there, she transferred to the prestigious Simsboro High School to teach until retirement after years.

Teaching was more than a passion for Myrtle, it was her calling. Throughout her distinguished career as an educator, Myrtle touched countless lives, inspiring students to believe in themselves, work hard and pursue their dreams, She was a mentor, role model, a source of encouragement, and someone who believes that every child deserves an opportunity to succeed. Her influence extended far beyond the classroom and the lessons she taught will continue to live on through the generations of students she impacted.

Above all of her accomplishments, a mother, her greatest pride and joy was her family. She loved her husband and six children. She was a loving mother whose heart knew no limits. Her love was unconditional; her advice was treasured; and her presence brought comfort and strength to those fortunate to know her. She was the person you could call, the shoulder you could lean on, the voice that offered wisdom and the heart that always made room for one more person.

To her friends, she was loyal, genuine, and loving. She had a special way of making people feel important, welcomed, and appreciated. Her laughter, her stories, her wisdom, and the little things that made her uniquely herself will forever remain in the hearts of those who loved her. Myrtle became a member of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, upon moving to Grambling, Louisiana and served faithfully on the Usher Board and the Mission board. Forever as a beacon, wisdom and source of humor she lit up the world around her until her Heavenly Father called her home, early Thursday morning, November 5.

Remembering the life of Nelda Baisy

Nelda Williams was born to the late John H. Williams and lola Lewis on April 22, 1945, in Ruston, Louisiana. Her older and only sibling, Johnny L. Williams. Preceded her in death.



Nelda W. Baisy

Nelda was reared in a Christian home in the Grambling community and united with the New Rocky Valley Baptist Church family at an early age. She remained a faithful member.

She was honored as "Woman of the Year" during Women's Day in April of 2011.

She was deeply committed to the betterment of her fellowman; therefore, she concentrated all her efforts toward education as she moved through the elementary, high school, and college corridors of Grambling. She graduated from high school in 1962 and then earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in 1966 in Elementary Education. In 1972 after attending Grambling State University and Kansas State University in Manhattan Kansas, she received a master's degree in Guidance and Counseling. Nelda also earned her Plus 30 from Grambling State University.

Nelda's work experience included the Pacific Bell Telephone Company in Los Angeles, California from 1966-1967. She also cultivated and maintained a successful career as a teacher that included:

1967 – 1970, Los Angeles Unified School District

1970-1971, Lincoln Parish (Reading Teacher), Greenwood Elementary School, Ruston, LA.

Pinecrest Elementary School, Monroe, LA.

1971-2000, Ouachita Parish Schools, Monroe, LA.

1973-2000, Central Elementary School, Calhoun, LA, where she worked until retirement from the Ouachita Parish School System. She was given a "Special Award" Teacher of the Year from Central Elementary School.

After retirement from teaching, Nelda became accessible and was able to address the needs of people while enjoying working in a variety of capacities with the following organizations: Royal Art Chapter #47, O.E.S., P. H. A. for fifty-four (54) years; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated; Grambling Alumnae Chapter (Lifetime Member) for sixty-one (61) years; Grambling State University National Alumni Association, Incorporated (Lifetime Member); Grambling Alumni Chapter of GUNAA (Local Member – formerly Elizabeth Robinson); Pinkie C. Wilkerson Life Development Center Foundation, Incorporated (Board of Director Member, Treasurer, Budget Committee Member); Lewis Garrett Funeral Home, Longview, TX (Past Owner) Jordan Valley Memorial Park. Longview, TX (Part Owner) Walter and Nelda Williams Baisy Scholarship (Director) Grambling Memorial Garden (President since 1988); Grambling University Athletic Foundation (Secretary) and Grambling Joy Fund Committee (Chairperson since 1996).

In 1972, she became Mrs. Nelda Wiliams Baisy when she married Walter Baisy on November 25. They were married for 53 years, 11 months, and 4 days.

They had no biological children; however, many that came through their "open" door were welcomed and found comfort there. Nelda and Walter enjoyed a happy life of travel adventures and hosting of family and friends.

Nelda worked for the enjoyment of others and even though she had moved from one role to another; her ideas, hopes, and aspirations will continue to thrive through the lives of her family members and friends.

Retired Educators Honor Veterans

By Joice M. Dunn

The Lincoln Parish Retired Educators (LPRE) honored Veterans, Friday, Nov.13, at their monthly meeting in the Grambling Community Room of the City Hall.



The speaker, Kevin Stevenson, is flanks by members of LPRE

Retired Lt. Colonel Billy Graham of the United States Army led the group into a Pledge of Allegiance salute to Veterans in honor of Veterans month.

The speaker was Kevin Stevenson. Coordinator of Suicide Prevention at the Overton Brooks Veterans Medical Center in Shreveport. Dr. Liz White, past president of the LPRE organization, introduced him to the group.

With more than 30 years of clinical experience as a licensed clinical social worker, Stevenson has currently served as the Suicide Prevention Coordinator for the past six years.

In his position within the Mental Health Service Line's Suicide Prevention Team, Kevin plays an essential role as a subject matter expert. He offers direct and compassionate support, along with case management for high-risk Veterans, while also spearheading important community outreach initiatives and training programs to promote best practices in suicide prevention.

Outside of his vital work at the VA, Kevin has a rich and inspiring personal background. Born and raised in Napoleonville, Louisiana, he is an alumnus of both Southern University and Grambling State University. A proud veteran himself, having served 25 years in the United States Army.

Stevenson told the group he came from humble beginnings, a family of mostly educators, but raised by a village. On a personal note, he said, "This meeting is a challenge for me, because I just lost an Aunt, but she wouldn't want me to miss this meeting."

He enlightened the group concerning the growing numbers of suicides among soldiers and veterans, but also people in general.

He talked about knowing the suicide signs, asking questions and validating them in order to reach someone. Letting the group know that suicide is a permanent solution for a temporary problem. If it's not seen as being important then that's a problem, Stevenson reminded the group.

He recalled as a child his love of watching cartoons and how Wild E, Coyote was always trying to come up with new ways to catch the Road Runner. The military taught problem solving, by identifying the problem. Developing the solution and then executing, Stevenson said.

When a soldier is on Military Suicide watch, he gets to keep his weapon to leave him with his dignity but there's no ammunition. Steverson said, "When Alcohol and drugs go away, the problems are still there. Suicide is an epidemic and increasing everyday especially among females."

In the Bible when God asked Cain the question: Where is thou brother? He said, "Am I my brother's keeper"? Kevin said the military stands on, 'I am my brother's keeper' every day. He reminded the group that seven people in the Bible committed suicide, it didn't just start.

The coordinator recommended receiving training, having a plan, being available and don't say to a person, 'you don't want to kill yourself'.

There were many questions among the group. Several proposed how would they know if someone was in crisis? He gave them signs to watch out for.

In other business, President McArthur Simmons reminded the group of upcoming events for the organization.



CHURCH NEWS

When Your Faith Is Put to the Test

By Reverend J. Loren Russell

Job 1:20–22: Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord." 22 In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

Job 42:5: "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You."

Have you ever experienced a season when everything seemed to go wrong, even though you were doing your best to live faithfully before God? Have you ever prayed, served, sacrificed, and trusted God, only to find yourself facing circumstances you could not understand? If so, you are not alone. The story of Job reminds us that faithfulness to God does not exempt us from adversity, but adversity does not have to destroy our faith.

Job was a man of integrity who feared God and turned away from evil. He was blessed with a large family, great wealth, and an excellent reputation. Yet, in a series of devastating events, he lost his possessions, his servants, and all ten of his children. Then his own health deteriorated, leaving him physically and emotionally broken.

How could such tragedy happen to a man who was faithful to God?

Job's story challenges the assumption that good people will never experience hardship. Sometimes we mistakenly believe that if we pray enough, obey enough, and live right, we can avoid life's painful seasons. But Scripture never promises that believers will be spared every trial.

Faith is not measured only by how loudly we praise God when life is good, but also by whether we continue to trust Him when life becomes difficult. Job grieved deeply. He tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell to the ground in worship. His grief did not cancel his faith, and his worship did not mean he was free from pain. He brought his brokenness before God while acknowledging God's sovereignty.

We can learn from Job that faith does not require us to pretend we are not hurting. We can cry, ask questions, and seek understanding without abandoning our relationship with God.



Reverend J. Loren Russell

Job's friends made matters worse by assuming his suffering must have resulted from personal sin. Their mistake reminds us not to judge people by their circumstances. When others are hurting, they may need our compassion more than our explanations.

Eventually, God spoke to Job out of the whirlwind. God did not provide a detailed explanation for every tragedy Job had experienced. Instead, He revealed the greatness of His wisdom and the limitations of human understanding. Job responded, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You" (Job 42:5).

His encounter with God changed his perspective. He came to recognize more deeply the greatness of the One he served. He was then prepared to pray for his friends and God promised He would answer.

Sometimes God changes our understanding before He changes our circumstances. We may not receive every answer we seek, but we can continue to grow in humility, trust, and compassion.

When your faith is tested, keep praying, keep trusting, keep serving, and remember that your suffering does not define the limits of God's greatness.

Your faith may be tested by adversity, but you can continue trusting the God whose wisdom is greater than your understanding.

Be Blessed!

Rev. J. Loren Russell is an associate minister at Goodwill Baptist Church and is the clergy officiant of the Evangelical Church of God, all in Bronx, NY. He is also President/CEO of The JLR Company for Church Financial & Strategic Consulting (718-328-8096), and hosts "Matters of Faith – The Radio Show" on Monday nights from 8:00–10:00 PM on Facebook Live. Be sure to Friend "Matters of Faith" on YouTube and email us at mattersoffaith.mof@gmail.com. Order your copy of Matters of Faith: The eBook at www.smashwords.com/books/view/993177.

Church Announcements

Pilgrim Rest Church to hold Soup Kitchen/Clothing Give-Away

The Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church will hold a Soup Kitchen/ Clothing Give-Away on Saturday, Nov. 21, from 10 a.m. until 2p.m. The church is located on 622 W. Line Ave., Ruston.

For the spirit of Thanksgiving all are invited to shop and grab a bowl of soup or chili. The merchandise is gently used items such as clothes, jackets, coats, books and toys. There will be drop-offs to the sick, shut-in and elderly.

For more information, please contact Fredda Winzer at 318-224-1043.

China Grove Church to hold Thanksgiving Community Meal

The China Grove Baptist Church will hold a Community Thanksgiving Meal Saturday, November 21, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the church on 407 Vernon St., Ruston.

For additional information please contact any church member. The church is pastored by Rev. Damian E. Wilson, Sr.

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, December 14. 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 Farmerville Hwy., Ruston

Fellowship, 6476 Hwy 151, Dubach

Fellowship,1572 Highway 507 South, Simsboro

First, 117 Oak St., - One block south of Hwy. 80 in Choudrant

First, Hico St., Dubach

First, 200 S. Trenton St., Ruston

First, Simsboro

Friendship,143 West Sixth Street, Bernice

Grace, 2808 Trenton Ave. , Ruston

Grace Bible, 216 Rough Edge Rd., Ruston

Greater Pleasant Grove, 1270 Golf Course Rd., Unionville

Greater St. Luke, 163 St. Luke Church Rd, Arcadia

Gumspring, 3117 Hwy 151, Farmerville

Hebron, Love Chapel, 1525 Sikes St, Ruston

Hico, 653 Hwy. 152, Dubach

Hopewell, 7657 Fellowship Rd., Hwy 151, Dubach

Lane Chapel, 1016 McAllister, Ruston

Lanes Chapel, Hwy. 151 Downsville

Liberty Hill, Simsboro

Longstraw, 1799 Styles, Ranch Rd.,

Love Chapel, 1525 Sikes St, Ruston

Macedonia, No.1, Rt. 2, Dubach

Macedonia, No. 2, 489 E. Sibley Rd., Choudrant

Mineral Springs, 4599 Hwy 822, Dubach

Mount Harmony, 210 Mt. Harmony Church Rd, Ruston

Mount Calm, 566 Mount Calm Rd., Simsboro

Mount Olive, 571 Mt. Olive Rd. Grambling, Louisiana.

Mount Olive Outreach, 2817 S. Service Road W., Ruston

Mount Pisgah, Hwy. 3061, Ruston

Mount Sinai, 2269 Hwy. 145, Choudrant

Mount Vernon, 1356 Hwy. 167 N., Dubach

Mount Zion, 2586 Hwy 150., Grambling

Mount Zion No. 2, 113 California Plant Road, Dubach

New Hope, Choudrant

New Hope, 302 W. Vaughn, Ruston

New Liberty Hill, Hwy. 544, Simsboro

New Living Word Ministries, 1900 W. Barnett Springs, Ruston

New Pilgrim Rest, Inc., 2697 Elm St., Arcadia

New Prospect, 3438 Hwy. 167 N., Dubach

New Prosperity, 1378 Prosperity Church, Clay

New Rocky Valley, 2155 Martin Luther King Ave., Grambling

Northview Missionary, Highway 33, Ruston

Olive Grove, 3138 Olive Grove Rd, Choudrant

Pilgrim Rest, 622 W. Line Ave., Ruston

Pine Grove, 470 Chandler Rd., Ruston

Pleasant Grove, 1366 Pleasant Grove Road, Choudrant

Pleasant Grove,"The Oasis in the Woods", 446 Bowden Rd., Ruston

Pleasant Hill, 1127 Mondy Rd, Simsboro

Rock Corner & Garden of Prayer, 824 Rock Corner Rd, Dubach, off Hwy.33, 14 miles north of Ruston

Rocky Valley, Simsboro

Solid Rock, 1511 West California Hwy 80, Ruston

Southside, 3191 South Vienna St., Ruston

Springhill, 727 Dicks Store Rd., Ruston

St. David, Vienna.

St. John, Old Grambling Rd., Ruston.

St. Mary, 1114 Larson St., Ruston.

St. Peter, 404 Longstraw Rd., Ruston

St. Rest, 09 Walker Rd., Choudrant

St. Rest, Hwy. 146 West, Dubach

Temple, 1515 S. Service Rd. W. Ruston

True Believers, 184 CCC Road, Ruston

The Springs, (A ministry of Temple Baptist Church) 1601 S. Barnett Springs Ave., Ruston

The Springs.life The Word, 504 S. Main St., Grambling University - 2856 W. California, Ruston

Vernon, 190 Vernon-Eros Road, Ruston

Woods Chapel, 326 Hwy 454, Ruston

Zion Hill, 505 Lee St., Ruston

Zion Traveler, 1201 Martin Luther King Dr, Ruston

CATHOLIC

St. Benedict, 471 Main St., Grambling

St. Thomas Aquinas, 810 Carey Avenue, Ruston

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Church of Christ, 2902 Hwy. 80 West, Ruston

Church of Christ, 146 King St., Grambling

Northside, 1804 N. Trenton St., Ruston

Orleans Cir. Church of Christ, 2103 Orleans Cir., Ruston

Ruston, 2300 W. Woodward Ave., Ruston, www. rustonchurchofchrist.org

EPISCOPAL

Church of the Redeemer, 504 Tech Dr., Ruston

St. Luke's, 538 Main St., Grambling

METHODIST

Ansley Union, 328 Ansley Rd, Ruston, located 10 miles south of Ruston off Hwy 167

Antioch UMC, Simsboro

Arcadia First UMC, Arcadia

Choudrant UMC, 125 Pecan St., Choudrant

Dubach UMC, Dubach

First UMC, Arcadia

Grace, 3401 N. Trenton St., Ruston

Lewis Temple, Main St., Grambling

Mays Chapel CME, 615 W. Line Ave., Ruston

Memorial UMC, 9325 Hwy 80, Simsboro.

Mt. Mariah UMC - Salem UMC - 11793 Hwy. 151, Dubach

St. Peter AME, 1104 Arlington St., Ruston.

Trinity Methodist, 1000 Woodward Ave., Ruston

Wesley Chapel, 4330 Hwy. 818, Ruston

PENTECOSTAL

Anchor Tabernacle, Exit 93 from I-20 then South 1/2 mile, Choudrant

First Pentecostal, Corner of Kentucky and Goodwin Ruston

King's Court UPC, 2401 S. Service Rd. West, Ruston

LifePoint Church,1018 S. Vienna St., Ruston. lifepointruston.com

The Pentecostals, 2851 Hwy 33 North, Ruston

Powerhouse Temple of Christ Apostolic, 101 Main St., Grambling

United Pentecostal, Dubach

Zion Temple Apostolic Faith Deliverance – Eastern Hills, off Beacon Light Rd., Ruston

Voice of Revival Ministry - 304 W. California St., Ruston-

PRESBYTERIAN

Alabama (USA), 2091 Hwy 145, Choudrant

Covenant Reformed, 2106 Cooktown Rd., Ruston

Greenwood, Lincoln Parish Rd. 181, between Mitcham's & Hwy. 146, Ruston

Ruston (USA), 212 N. Bonner St.

OTHERS

Abundant Grace Tabernacle, 3092 Hwy 556, Choudrant

Campus Community Worship Center, 1000 Saratoga St., Ruston

Christian L.I.F.E. Church, 107 Love Ave., Ruston

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 205 Woodhaven Rd., Ruston

Church of the Living God, 1438 Hwy. 167 W., Dubach

Church of the Nazarene, 1101 Center St., Ruston

Douglas Church, 1642 Hwy 821, Ruston

Church of God in Christ, 256 Voss Street, Dubach

Faith Church, 1507 Goodwin Road, Ruston

Focus Christian Ministries, Martin Luther King Community Center, 901 Martin Luther King Dr., Ruston

Fountain of Praise United Worship Center, 1394 Hazel St., Arcadia

The Gospel, 108 Sanctuary Rd, Ruston

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 2508 Kavanaugh Road, Ruston

Impact Worship Center, Greenwood Recreation Center, 1306 Cornell Ave, Ruston

Ruston Housing Authority Building 901 Martin Luther King Dr. Ruston.

Lifechurch.LA, 3000 S. Vienna St., Ruston

LifePoint Church of Ruston, 1018 S. Vienna St., Ruston

Living Water Full Gospel Church,149 Fairgrounds Rd., Ruston

Miracle Temple COGIC, 1405 S. Farmerville, Ruston

New Living Word Ministry, 1900 Barnett Springs Rd. Ruston

New Testament Church at Grambling Inc., 508 Main St., Grambling

Praise Temple, Ramada Inn, 107 Love Ave., Ruston

St. Paul Lutheran, 504 Tech Drive, Ruston

The Bridge Community Church, North Campus, 2301 N. Trenton, Ruston

Triumph The Church and Kingdom of God in Christ, Hwy. 3061 E. Tenn. Rd., Ruston

United Faith Tabernacle Ministries & Prayer Center, 303 Cherry St., Bernice,

Upon the Rock Outreach Center, 513 E. Texas Ave., Ruston

HEALTH & WELLNESS

CHARMING'S CORNER

Are You Grateful For What You Already Have?

By Charming Davis

Sometimes we're so busy asking God for what's next that we forget to look around at what already arrived.

Think about yourself five years ago.

There are things surrounding you today that an older version of you once desperately wanted.

Maybe it's the job.

The apartment.

The relationship.

The peace.

The confidence.

The opportunity.

The ability to finally say no.

Maybe the blessing didn't arrive exactly how you imagined it, so you didn't recognize it.

Psalm 126:3 (NLT) says, "Yes, the Lord has done amazing things for us! What joy!"

Gratitude isn't pretending everything is perfect.

It's becoming present enough to recognize what is good while you're still growing.

That's important in 2026 because we're constantly being shown somebody else's next thing.

Somebody bought a house.

Somebody got engaged.

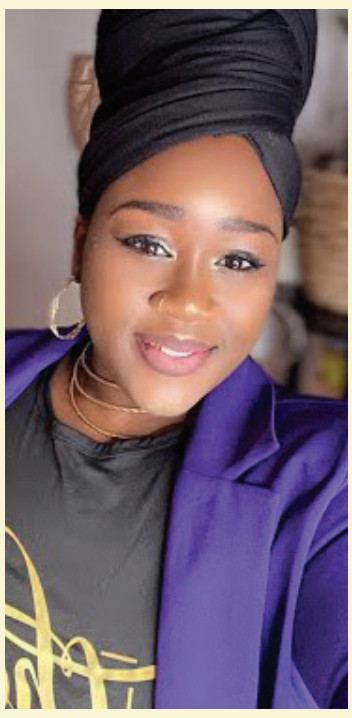
Somebody launched a business.

Somebody traveled somewhere beautiful.

Suddenly your answered prayer starts looking small because you're comparing it to somebody else's highlight reel.

Comparison can make abundance feel like lack.

Energy healing and mindfulness practices can help bring our awareness back into the present moment.



Charming Davis

Through prayer, breathwork, Reiki, sound healing, meditation or simply sitting quietly, we can intentionally reconnect with ourselves instead of constantly chasing external stimulation.

Sometimes your energy doesn't need another goal.

It needs gratitude.

Take inventory.

What survived?

What healed?

What did you learn?

What opportunity finally opened?

What prayer did God answer differently than you expected?

And even more importantly, who have you become?

Philippians 4:11 (NLT) speaks about learning to be content regardless of circumstances.

Contentment doesn't mean losing ambition.

You can be grateful and still desire expansion.

You can appreciate today while preparing for tomorrow.

You can celebrate the current chapter without pretending it's the final chapter.

Maybe that's one of the greatest spiritual practices we need right now: learning how to recognize when we're already standing inside something we once prayed for.

Before asking God, "What's next?"

Take a moment and say:

"Thank You for what is now."

Naturally Charming Universe Holistic Wellness Center offers spiritual counseling, clarity sessions, energy healing and distant healing sessions for those seeking deeper connection, restoration and alignment. Holistic and spiritual wellness products are also available to shop online.

The connection between PTSD and substance use disorders

By Dr. Jeannetta S. Jones

Problems with substance abuse often go hand in hand with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). When an individual who is diagnosed with PTSD makes the decision to use alcohol or drugs, well, this can put people in risky situations which could lead to traumatic events. There are times when individuals will use drugs or alcohol to manage PTSD symptoms.

What is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?

Post traumatic stress disorder is a mental health condition that is caused by an extremely stress or terrifying event. This means being a part of it or witnessing it. It is believed that most individuals who experience traumatic events may have a challenging time adjusting and/or coping for an abbreviated period of time. However, it is also believed that with time coupled with taking care of themselves, they will get better.

What is Substance Use Disorder (SUD)?

Substance use disorder (SUD) is a complex condition in which there is uncontrolled use of a substance despite harmful consequences. According to psychiatry.org, individuals with SUD will typically have an intense focus on using certain substances such as alcohol, tobacco, or other substances. They will keep using the substance even when they know it is causing problems or will cause problems in the future.

How can PTSD and Substance USE create problems?

When individuals use both alcohol and drugs, the combination makes PTSD symptoms worse. There are some individuals who may use alcohol as a sleep aid, when alcohol(ethanol) can make sleep less restful. Substance use can cause other problems, such as physical pain, medical problems, and difficulty keeping a job. Some individuals with both disorders may also have a higher risk of depression, anxiety, and suicide.

What are symptoms of co-occurring PTSD and Substance USE Disorders?

There is often a display of a range of overlapping symptoms that can make diagnosis and treatment challenging in individuals with both disorders. Symptoms may include hyperarousal signs such as irritability, difficulty concentrating and an exaggerated startle response, according to rosewood recovery. Moreover, individuals with PTSD and SUD may experience intrusive memories, flashbacks, along with distressing dreams. Individuals may also present avoidance behaviors whereby they stay away from places, people and activities that remind them of trauma. They might exhibit negative mood states like emotional numbness, feelings of detachment and persistent negative thoughts about themselves or the world. Another topic of discussion involving PTSD and SUD is the emerging of other behavior issues such as sleep disturbances, reckless, impulsive actions, and heightened emotional reactivity. We should keep in mind that individuals who indulge in substance use may do so to diminish distress that is caused by the trauma. Not realizing that it worsens both PTSD and SUD symptoms over a period.



Dr. Jeannetta Jones

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PTSD AND SUD

Research strongly indicates that about half of individuals who are diagnosed with PTSD meets the criteria for SUD. This means that there is an overlap which can impact the success of treatment. Typically, individuals with PTSD often turn to alcohol or other substances as a way to cope and numb their symptoms, which is also called self-medicating. Granted, this coping mechanism may relieve emotional pain temporarily but can lead to dependence on substances, according to research.

Effective treatment must address both sets of symptoms. Integrated approaches that combine trauma-focused therapies with addiction counseling are essential for managing the interplay. It is also believed that recognizing these overlapping symptoms early can improve prognosis. Substance use affects brain chemistry by altering pathways involved in stress response and emotional regulation.

If you have gone through one or more traumatic events and have symptoms for a month or more, this could mean that you have PTSD. There are self-screening tools that are available and can help you find out if your feelings/behaviors are related to PTSD. If there are concerns regarding substance use, there is an alcohol and substance use questionnaire. These tools are available on www.ptsd.va.gov.

Resources:

- www.mayoclinic.org
- www.nami.org
- www.nimh.gov
- www.rosewoodrecovery.com
- www.ptsd.va.gov
- www.webmd.org

Jeannetta Stephens-Jones, Ed.D., is a retired Educational Diagnostician/Speech Pathologist, and president of NAMI Ruston Board of Directors. Contact her at jjones79_aka@yahoo.com.

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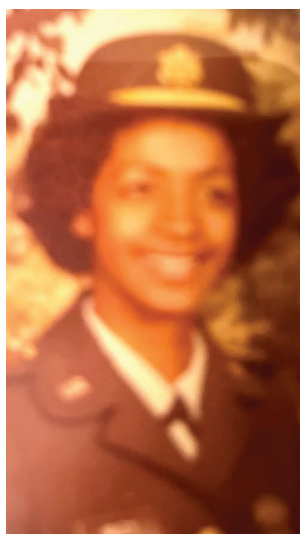
ARTS & CULTURE

Local Female Veterans Make Contributions

By Joice M. Dunn



Margaret Young



Consuella Lockheart



Virginia White

Several females in Grambling and surrounding areas have chosen to contribute service in one branch of the military or another. They have served their country well, if only for a few years, or a chosen career has grown from the experience.

Veterans Day is observed as a national holiday on November 11, honoring veterans of the armed forces and those killed in the country's wars. The observance originated in 1919 on the first anniversary of the 1918 armistice that ended World War I and was known as Armistice Day. It was commemorated in 1921 with the burial of an unknown soldier from World War I at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

November 11 became an official national holiday in the United States in 1938. In 1954 the name was changed to Veterans Day to honor those who had served in all U.S. wars. Ceremonies are held each year at the Tomb of the Unknowns, and floral tributes are placed on the graves of service men and women and at memorials throughout the country.

Virginia Scott, La Vet Corps Campus Navigator, now serves at Grambling State University because the university has several Veterans and Veteran dependents.

"Louisiana Department of Veteran's Affairs and AmeriCorps are working together to support veterans transitioning into college life," explained Scott, who has held the university position since August of 2025.

Scott said the organization's mission is to help veterans, their families, and campus communities ensure a smooth return from active-duty service.

"Through LA Vet Corps, student veterans and dependents can access education, benefits, and support services directly on campus. As school navigator, I'll mentor student veterans, help them access benefits, and foster an active veteran community by developing a student veterans' organization (SVO)," according to Scott.

She's an adventurous and genuine soul, a wife, mother, sister, grandmother and great-grandmother. Scott has over 35 years of experience as a Licensed Cosmetology Instructor and Cosmetologist. She moved to Ruston a little over 12 years ago, from Houston Texas and enjoys working out, spending time with family and dancing!

Scott may be reached at Email: scottv@gram.edu or call Office: 318-274-6264 | Cell: 318-232-2202.

Consuella Wiley Lockheart, a graduate of Grambling State University, entered military service in July 1977 when offered the opportunity to be in the last class of the Women's Army Corps (WAC).

"I chose the Signal Corps, communication branch, thinking I'd be a reporter/photographer. As it turned out, I was assigned to combat signal. This meant supporting artillery and infantry units in simulated battlefield operations. As an officer, my job initially was supervising a platoon of troops in physical training, maintenance of equipment and vehicles, and educational training," explained Lockheart.

She was married to a soldier and they had two children, a boy and girl.

Lockheart said, "My tenure in the Army was a proving ground for me. The experience helped me to develop confidence in myself, but more so to finally accept "my calling" as a teacher which I tried desperately to escape."

Her four years of active duty and 15 years as a reserve officer enabled Lockheart to sharpen her academic skills and management techniques that turned out to be essential in the education field where she began a 43-year-long career as a teacher."

Lt Col (Ret) Valerie Smith White served in United States Air Force after members of GSU band encouraged her to take the Air Force Qualifying Test.

"I passed the test and went to field training. I had planned to stay four years, but I loved what I was doing. I retired after 25 years," said White.

She received a BS in Management from Grambling State University, a MBA from Troy State Troy, Alabama and a EdD from GSU. She is married to Dean Emeritus Donald S. White, Sr., with two children: Scott and Aleis White.

"The military is truly a great life and sets you up for future successes. There is no substitute for discipline, respect, decorum, and love of country," explained White.

Margaret Marie Young, daughter of Charles and Charlesetta Young of Grambling, earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Management from Grambling State in 1986. Continuing her commitment to education and professional development, she later earned a Master of Public Administration degree with a specialization in Human Resource Management from GSU in July 1997.

Margaret was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant (2LT) in the United States Army in December 1986 and entered active duty in January 1987.

Her interest in military service was heavily influenced by her father. Before commissioning, she served for three years with him in the Army National Guard Band. During her sophomore year in college, she joined the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), which set her on the path to becoming an Army officer.

As a U.S. Army Ordnance Officer, Margaret advised company commanders on the daily operations of maintenance shops and assumed command responsibilities when needed. She was responsible for the health, welfare, morale, training, and administration of approximately 70 military personnel.

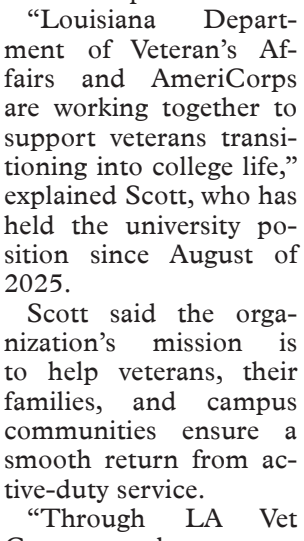
Her duties included developing policies and procedures for performance management and job training, providing direct maintenance support to military units in Seoul, South Korea, and overseeing international military students representing more than 40 countries. She also performed protocol and escort duties for foreign dignitaries while assigned to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, and fulfilled numerous responsibilities as she advanced from Second Lieutenant to First Lieutenant.

Margaret values the leadership and life skills she gained through military service. These experiences helped shape her professional career and strengthened qualities such as: Leadership, Decision-making, Integrity, Dependability, Adaptability and Resilience during times of change.

"The military is a great place to learn discipline and develop valuable skills that you can use throughout your life. The lessons, experiences, and leadership training you gain will benefit you both personally and professionally," explained Young.

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Comedian Mike Epps coming to Bossier City



Mike Epps

Comedian Mike Epps is coming to Margaritaville Resort Casino in Bossier City, LA, Friday January 15, 2027.

Epps is also an actor and played Day-Day Jones in Next Friday as well as its sequel, Friday After Next with Ice Cube. He also appeared in The Hangover and The Hangover Part III as "Black Doug".,

He was the voice of main character Boog in the animated film, Open Season 2, replacing Martin Lawrence, with whom he starred in the comedy, Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins, playing "Reggie", cousin of Roscoe (played by Lawrence). He played Lloyd Jefferson "L.J." Wayne in the Resident Evil films (2004–2007) and O'Neil in the Sony's Spider-Man Universe film Madame Web (2024). He has also had starring roles in the sitcoms Uncle Buck and The Upshaws.

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SPORTS

Grambling State Powers Past Bethune-Cookman, 32-21

GSU Athletics

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. | The Grambling State football team delivered a strong second-half performance Saturday afternoon, scoring 16 points in the third quarter to pull away from Bethune-Cookman for a 32-21 Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) victory at Daytona Stadium.

The Tigers (5-5, 3-4 SWAC) built a 10-0 halftime advantage before Bethune-Cookman (5-6, 3-4 SWAC) opened the second half with a touchdown to cut the deficit to three points.

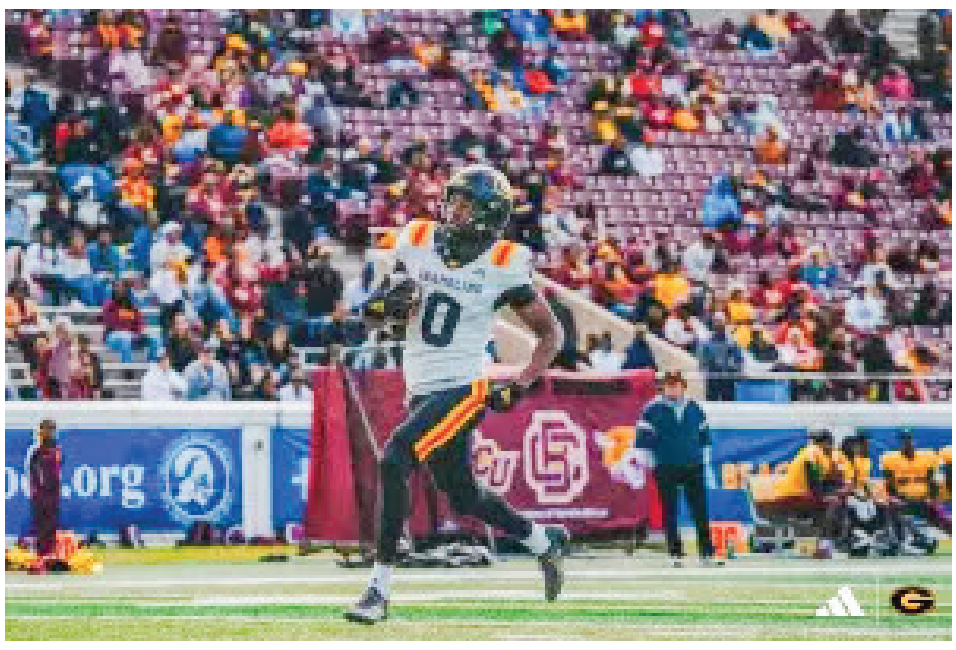
GSU answered with three consecutive scoring plays, including two touchdown passes from quarterback Jacobe Robinson to wide receiver Lantavious Murphy and a safety, to take control of the contest.

Robinson connected with Tyrone Wilson for a 53-yard touchdown pass at the 9:28 mark of the third quarter, extending the Tigers' lead to 17-7. On BCU's next possession, the Grambling defense forced an intentional grounding penalty in the end zone, resulting in a safety and pushing the advantage to 19-7.

The Tigers capitalized on the ensuing possession when Robinson found Murphy for a 25-yard touchdown strike, giving Grambling a 26-7 lead with 6:43 remaining in the third quarter.

Bethune-Cookman answered with a touchdown pass to make it 26-14, but Grambling State opened the fourth quarter with another connection between Robinson and Murphy. The duo connected on an 8-yard touchdown pass with 14:15 remaining, extending the lead to 32-14.

The Wildcats added a touchdown midway through the fourth quarter to trim the margin to 32-21. However, Grambling's defense came up with a critical stop late in the game, forcing a turnover on downs inside the Bethune-Cookman 10-yard line to preserve the victory.



Robinson completed 11 of 23 passes for 224 yards and four touchdowns, with one interception. Murphy was his top target, finishing with six receptions for 122 yards and three touchdowns. Wilson added a 53-yard touchdown reception, while Tyson George contributed four catches for 49 yards.

On the ground, D'Shaun Ford paced the Tigers with 108 yards on 21 carries. Robinson added 61 rushing yards on six attempts, giving Grambling another dimension offensively.

The Tigers finished with 400 yards of total offense, including 166 rushing yards and 234 passing yards. Grambling also converted eight of 15 third-down opportunities and recorded 19 first downs.

Defensively, Gramg State held Bethune-Cookman to 350 total yards and just two conversions on 12 third-down attempts. The Tigers recorded four sacks for 23 yards and added a safety.

Jamal Jordan led the defensive effort with 13 total tackles, including six solo stops. Marcellius Johnson added nine tackles, while Christen Williams finished with eight. Markese Jackson recorded a sack, and Corey Amos also brought down the quarterback for a sack.

Grambling controlled the game throughout the first half, opening the scoring with a 27-yard field goal from Theodore Caballero in the first quarter. The Tigers added their first touchdown late in the second quarter when Robinson connected with Murphy for a 63-yard score, giving Grambling a 10-0 lead at the break.

SWAC Suspends Arkansas-Pine Bluff and Grambling State Players following Altercation

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – The Southwestern Athletic Conference has suspended and levied institutional fines at the Arkansas-Pine Bluff and Grambling State football teams stemming from a postgame altercation on Saturday, November 7th.

"We're extremely disappointed by the events that transpired during postgame of the Arkansas-Pine Bluff at Grambling State football game," said SWAC Commissioner Dr. Charles McClelland. "Acts of that nature have zero place in the Southwestern Athletic Conference and intercollegiate athletics."

"The Conference Office has and will continue to enforce a zero-tolerance policy for all acts deemed to be unsportsmanlike and contrary to the high standard of good sportsmanship we expect from all individuals associated with the athletics programs within our league."

After conducting a thorough investigation and coordinated review with both institutions, it was determined that both schools violated the league's code of ethics/conduct by committing acts of unsportsmanlike conduct.

23 student-athletes (9 from Arkansas-Pine Bluff and 14 from Grambling State) have been suspended for their respective involvement in the altercation. Of the total number of 23 suspensions, multiple players have been disciplined with two game suspensions due to the severity of their actions.

Additionally, in accordance to the league's bylaws and sports regulations, the Conference Office has issued a fine against Arkansas-Pine Bluff in the amount of $25,000.00, along with a fine against Grambling State in the amount of $25,000.00.

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GPM Investments
$10/hour advertised

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