

Program Helps Disabled Young Adults, p. 5

FREE



Remembering Will Mastin, p. 7

Rosa Walker, p. 2

"When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be."

- Lao Tzu



Friday

February 19, 2021

Vol. 7, No. 23

ValleyWeeklyllc.com

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Rev. Dr. Oscar L. Montgomery

For more than four decades, Dr. Montgomery has served as Pastor of the Union Hill Primitive Baptist Church in Huntsville, Ala., growing its membership from 60 to over 700.

Graduating from Purdue University in 1976, Dr. Montgomery returned to Alabama A&M University where blessings of God upon his life were evident as he rose rapidly through the academic ranks from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor to Professor and ultimately Vice President.

During his 22-year tenure at AAMU, while serving as a lecturer, professor, researcher and administrator Dr. Montgomery amassed an extensive collegiate background.

In addition to fulfilling his preaching, teaching, equipping, ministering, and administering responsibilities as pastor, Dr. Montgomery in 1989, following God's vision for the Union Hill congregation, successfully led the church to construct a Christian Worship and Educational Facility at the



cost of approximately \$2 million dollars. In 1997, he led the congregation in the construction of a \$2.5 million dollar Community Life Center for the purpose of ministry to the Huntsville community. Union Hill currently sits on a 35-acre campus, all acquired during his tenure.

At the top of the community activist's credits and accomplishments lies the love of his wife, the former Alfredia L. Marshall, and their four children and grandchildren Paula Rodney (Andrew), Renita Woodard (Eric), Christa, and Oscar, Jr; one granddaughter, Eden Grace Rodney, and three grandsons, Langston, Alijah, and Royce.

Multi-talented WCA Student to Attend West Point

An ultra well-rounded senior at Westminster Christian Academy is bound for West Point.

Christina Scruggs rises to the top in several major categories, ranging from leadership and academics to community service and extracurricular activities.

Christina has excelled at

soccer, basketball and as a cross country runner. Additionally, she has served on the Color Guard, played flute in the marching band and wind ensemble.

Christina held officer positions in the Key Club, freshman class, Spanish Club, and Varsity girls cross country (captain).

She was twice selected to participate in the University of Montevallo Honor Band. She also devoted significant time as a volunteer.

She is the daughter of Lt. Col. (Ret) Samuel and Kyong Scruggs of Harvest, Ala.



Valley Community Remembers Mr. "Absolutely Not!"

Family, former co-workers and scores of friends came together in mourning and celebration of the life of Erskine L. Valrie during a local Friday, February 12, graveside service at Valhalla Memory Gardens.

A native of Deland, Fla., Valrie attended Southwestern High School as an academically stellar athlete. He enrolled at Alabama A&M University on a four-year scholarship, playing football under the legendary Coach Louis Crews, as well as professionally in the Continental Football League. In the athletic records of AAMU, and the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC), he holds the record for the punting average of 46.5 yards per kick. When



asked if an athlete has surpassed him, he proudly responded, "Absolutely not!"

He went on to earn a master's degree from AAMU in urban studies and was a major supporter in the school's athletics program.

After a brief stint with the Model Cities Demonstration Agency in Huntsville, Ala., Valrie's professional career included productive experiences at community planning agencies in Mont-

gomery and Tuskegee, Ala.; the Small Business Administration in Birmingham, Ala.; Redstone Federal Credit Union; and the Von Braun Center.

A member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., he was a diligently participant on the Trustee Ministry of Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church.

He was married to his college sweetheart, Georgia Sharp Valrie, and was the father of two daughters, Lisa Kinsey Smith and Kreslynn Lynette Valrie, and four grandchildren: Kalila D. Fleming, Ensign Kyle E. Fleming, Courtney Courtney Smith, and Kory E. Fleming.

The Valley Weekly
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CALLED 2 PREACH

REV. MICHAEL RICE

“His Works and His Ways”

Daniel 4:37;
Proverbs 6:16-19



This verse houses the humbled words of King Nebuchadnezzar following his “pasture arrest” experience. He made the mistake of giving himself credit for being in a palace and because he dismissed the warning by Daniel, God re-located him from the palace to a pasture. This long and

lasting descent taught Neb how to praise God rather than himself.

The story sounds satirical, but it was anything but. That experience detoxified the heart of the king and flushed his soul and heart of all that putrid pride that had built up over the years prior to the event. It was Nebuchadnezzar’s concession speech. His previous resistance was squashed while hanging out with cattle and from a position of restoration he made this statement, “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose *works* are truth, and

His *ways* justice.” Note this bold bottom-line to his discovery, “And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.”

While many debate what they call “the sin” that is an abomination to God, He says this through the writer of Proverbs that there are *six things* that He hates and *seven are an abomination*. At the top of that list is “a



proud look.” Note that it is the “look” not the “acts” that God hates. Nebuchadnezzar learned that lesson

the hard way.

It is the restored king who needs to be heard, not the resisting one.

Spotlight on Our Elders ... Featuring

Mrs. Rosa Walker

Mrs. Rosa Rice Walker is a retired classroom instructor from the Huntsville City Schools System with more than 35 years of teaching experience in a variety of systems and settings.

Mrs. Walker’s education career is broad and diverse, encompassing kindergarten through high school levels. Moreover, at the postsecondary level, she served as assistant director of the Career Testing and Education Development Center at Alabama A&M University; developed and administered summer learning camps at Alabama State University; and worked in admissions at Troy University (Ft. Walton Beach, Fla., campus). She has taught in public school systems in Alabama, Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee and

Virginia. Beyond her public school experience, she also taught at a private Christian academy and served as a teaching effectiveness consultant at another. Additionally, she was a consultant and presenter with Empowerment Concepts, Inc., a business she co-founded with her husband.

Rosa grew up in Huntsville and graduated from William Hooper Councill High School. She earned an Associate of Arts degree at Crane [now Malcolm X] College in Chicago, Ill., a bachelor’s degree in elementary education at Alabama A&M University, a master’s degree in counseling at Troy University, and a master’s degree in elementary education at Alabama A&M University. Additionally, she attended Hampton University



in Virginia for certification in school administration.

Rosa is a member of St. John AME Church, where she has taught both Sunday and Bible School, served on the newsletter staff and is currently a stewardess and member of the church’s Caregivers Ministry.

She and her husband, Dr. Arthur Walker, have one adult daughter, Angela.

FEBRUARY 19 - SMOKEY ROBINSON - Born in Detroit, Mich., William “Smokey” Robinson, Jr., is an American singer, songwriter, record producer, and former record executive. He was the founder and front man of the Motown vocal group the Miracles. - Wikipedia.org



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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC CITY OF HUNTSVILLE

The City of Huntsville’s Community Development Department will hold a Public Hearing on **Monday, March 8, 2021** at 6:00 P.M. to receive input for the **2021 Action Plan Program Year** (7/1/20 to 6/30/21). The meeting will be held via Zoom at: <https://zoom.us/j/99150050000?pwd=dIZ1QzRNWUV4Yk56UG05dWQ4R0Z6dz09> or 1-646-558-8656; Meeting ID: 991 5005 0000. The City of Huntsville does not discriminate based on disability for the admission or access to its programs or activities. If you have any questions, or will need special accommodations, please call Turkessa C. Lacey - Community Development Department prior to the Public Hearing at 256-427-5400; TTY: 256-427-7092.

AVISO A LA CIUDAD PÚBLICA DE HUNTSVILLE

Le Service du développement communautaire de la Ville de Huntsville tiendra une audience publique le **lundi 8 mars 2021** à 18 h .M pour recevoir les commentaires de l’Année du Programme du Plan d’action 2021 (7/1/20 au 6/30/21). La réunion se tiendra via Zoom à: <https://zoom.us/j/99150050000?pwd=dIZ1QzRNWUV4Yk56UG05dWQ4R0Z6dz09> or 1-646-558-8656; ID de la réunion: 991 5005 0000. La ciudad de Huntsville no discrimina en base de la inhabilidad para la admisión ni tiene acceso a sus programas o actividades. Si usted tiene cualesquiera preguntas, o necesita comodidades especiales, llame por favor Turkessa C. De encaje - departamento del desarrollo de la comunidad antes de la audiencia pública en 256-427-5400; TTY: 256-427-7092.



THE VALLEY WEEKLY

CHAMPION GAME PLAN

PRESTON BROWN

“MORE THAN POLITICS”

Luke 15:7 says, “I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

You know, one of the things that I love most about Jesus is that He meets us where we are, but refuses to leave us there. He meets us in

our sinful ways and says “Go and sin no more.”

The main theme in the book of Luke is that Jesus came to seek and save the lost. And, He was especially sensitive to those who were hurting, because He knew that hurting people hurt other people.

That’s why He had no problem eating with sinners and tax collectors. In this



scripture, Luke talks about the love that God has for sinners and he explains them in the form of “lost things.” First, a lost sheep. Then, a lost coin. And, then a lost son.

In all of these stories, the “lost” are found and, when it happens, everyone rejoices. Even the angels in heaven rejoice. The message that is revealed here is, God

places great value on one repenting sinner. Therefore clarifying his mission that “He came to seek and save sinners,” Jesus came to deal with much more than “political issues” and financial statements.

Jesus reminds us that there will be more rejoicing over a redeemed soul, than settling any differences of opinions that continue to dominate our way of life.

Stay encouraged, my brothers and sisters, and make sure you purchase a copy of my book “A CHAMPION GAME PLAN FOR LIFE” at amazon.com.



Perspectives on
God Views
+
Current News

by tim allston

The Gospel According to my Positive COVID-19 Test

“Write my answer on a billboard, large and clear, so that anyone can read it at a glance and rush to tell the others. . . . But these things I plan won’t happen right away. Just be patient! They will not be overdue a single day!”

- Habakkuk 2:2,3.

God here instructed Habakkuk that writing God’s vision would make it both permanent and portable, so that its readers could broadcast it widely. God then cautioned him to wait on his blessings.

God sent me a similar message at an extremely inconvenient time.

Why me, Lord? And why now?

I tested COVID-19 positive during the Black Friday-New Year’s Day season, when U.S. businesses make 40% of their revenues.

At the time, I was scurrying to promote my current book, trying to launch my second book, and looking to publish a 2021 devotional book curated from my Valley Weekly columns.

But God allowed my COVID-19 to re-prioritize my life.

Since March, I’ve been doing everything right. I was an uber-facemasking, 20-second hand washing and six-feet-socially-distancing poster child!

But God chose to make me an example, . . .

God’s three vaccinations: Whoa, Slow and No!

First God showed me how unrealistic, self-stressing, and flatly inhumane my timetables were. Deadlines are now relaxed, and the 2021 devotional book will now debut in 2022.

Next, God reminded me that he’s my marketer and responsible primarily for its success. Not me.

Finally throughout my 14-day self-isolation, Matthew 6:33’s “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” awakened me each morning as my new pursuit.

I then realized that I was doing more for Amazon when I should’ve been doing more for God.

Hopefully, I won’t need a relapse of a deadly disease to relearn those lessons. Make more realistic deadlines. Reprioritize who’s the boss. And practice more long-range planning.

And so should you.

tim allston is the author of the printed/digital/audiobook, *The U.S. Coronavirus Crisis and the Rise of the “Silver-Mettle” Leaders*, available now at <https://amzn.to/3cx1koV>.

City Council Meetings



Huntsville City Council Regular Meetings are held in the City Council Chambers of the Municipal Building on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m., Downtown Huntsville.

Watch the meetings live via HuntsvilleAL.gov/HSVTV or on the City of Huntsville Facebook page (@huntsvillecity).

For more information, call (256) 427-5011.



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THE VALLEY WEEKLY

VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

Black History Month

February 1-28

THEME:

“The Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity”

“The World of Frida”

Celebrating the culture, style, and persona of visionary Mexican painter Frida Kahlo (1907-1954)

Huntsville Museum of Art
300 Church Street
Huntsville, Ala.

(Admission Charged)

February 19

Dancing with the President and First Lady
Alabama A&M University
Virtual Event

Access: \$25 & \$10 (Students)

Contacts: Dr. Larry McDaniel (larry.mcdaniel@aamu.edu)

February 21

Essential Workers Appreciation (Last Day)
U.S. Space and Rocket Center
One Tranquility Base
Huntsville, Ala.

February 22

Christopher Cross
40th Anniversary Tour
Von Braun Center Mars Music Hall
700 Monroe Street
Huntsville, Ala. - 7:30 p.m.

February 25

Lauren Daigle
Christian Music Singer and Songwriter
Von Braun Center Propst Arena
700 Monroe Street
Huntsville, Ala. - 7:30 p.m.

February 27

“Carnival of the Animals”
Huntsville Symphony Orchestra
Von Braun Center
Mark C. Smith Concert Hall
Activities: 9:30 a.m.
Performance: 11a.m.

AAMU vs. Alcorn State
Football - Louis Crews Stadium

March 4

28th Scholarship Awards Program
North Alabama NSBE Professionals Chapter
www.NSBE-NorthAlabamaAE.com



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PowerShot

“vocation does not come from a voice out there calling me to be something I am not. It comes from a voice in here calling me to be the person I was born to be.”

—Thomas Merton



“Think you’re escaping and run into yourself. Longest way round is the shortest way home.” - James Joyce

HUNTSVILLE AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Public Meeting Notice

The Citizens Advisory Committee of the Huntsville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will meet Monday, February 22, 2021 at 5:00 pm. The Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board meets on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 4:00 pm. ALL meetings will be held on the 1st floor of Huntsville City Hall located at 308 Fountain Circle, unless otherwise noted on the Huntsville-Area MPO website at www.huntsvillempo.org. To read the plans up for review at this meeting visit: <http://www.huntsvillempo.org/plans-and-reports/> For all other information on these meetings visit: <http://www.huntsvillempo.org/about/meetings-and-agendas/>

A&M's Bulldog LIFE Program Assists Young Adults with Intellectual Disability

For those that did not know, Alabama A&M University started Bulldog Learning Independence Fostering Education and Employment (LIFE) in 2017. Out of 285 Postsecondary programs for young adults with intellectual disabilities in the nation, AAMU is the first and only historically black college and university with this distinction.

How did Bulldog LIFE start? A proposal to the Alabama Council on Disabilities was funded in the amount of \$225,000, in collaboration with the University of Memphis Institute on Disabilities (UMID).

Dr. Sharon Brown, program director, (pictured) worked two to three years to put the infrastructure in place, and the first cohort was received in 2018. Prior to accepting the first students, the program achieved federal status via the College Transition Program (CTP) with the Department of Education. This permits students who are eligible to receive the Pell Grant. Based on the CTP, students are eligible to receive a scholarship in the amount of \$1,700 for two semesters from the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS).

The first cohort finished its Certificate of Completion in May 2020, but COVID-19 hit, hampering recruitment efforts with the local schools. Through Huntsville City Schools support, the program has continued to make

progress using Zoom and other technology to recruit young people for Bulldog LIFE.

In a recent meeting with Sheila Johnson, graduation coach at Mae C. Jemison High School, she stated, "We are ecstatic that our students are afforded the opportunity to take advantage of this program."

The Alabama A&M Bulldog LIFE Postsecondary Education Program is a 60-hour program culminating in a completion award certificate in Career and Community Studies.

Participation in the Bulldog LIFE program provides students with an option for continuing their education beyond high school to increase employment opportunities. The program provides an individualized program of study in the areas of academic, social, vocational and independent living skills for students ages 18-29 with intellectual disabilities.

Bulldog LIFE as a part of its application process requires the student to provide a copy of secondary



transcript, secondary IEP, and any psychological or vocational assessments that confirm that the student has received a diagnosis as an intellectual disability.

Persons with intellectual disabilities are defined in HEA Sec. 484(s), who (1) have a cognitive impairment characterized by significant limitations in intellectual and cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills; and (2) are currently or were formerly eligible for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

This includes individuals who were determined eligible for special edu-

cation or related services under IDEA but were homeschooled or attended private school. At the heart of Bulldog LIFE is a person-centered planning model that uses the Systems Approach to Placement assessment instrument to develop a specialized program that best fits the unique skills, abilities, and needs of each student admitted into the program.

The Bulldog LIFE program is administered by AAMU's Rehabilitation Counseling concentration, designed to assist people with physical and developmental disabilities in finding meaningful and lasting employment, and serves as a community rehabilitation provider (CRP) for mid-south regional area vocational rehabilitation departments in Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee.

For additional information, contact Dr. Sharon Brown, CRC, coordinator of Rehabilitation Counseling/director of Bulldog LIFE, at (256) 372-8002 or e-mail sharon.brown@aamu.edu.

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VALLEY DEATHS

NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

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Graveside service for MR. JAMES OTHA STEGER (b. 1956) was held Tuesday, February 16, Valley View Memorial Gardens.

Public Viewing for RETIRED SERGEANT FIRST CLASS JAMIE DENISE HOWARD (b. 1980) was held Sunday, February 14, in the Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Graveside service for MR. DAVID C. CLEMONS, JR. (b. 1951) was held Saturday, February 13, at Oakwood Memorial Gardens.

Graveside service for MR. ERSKINE VALRIE (b. 1946) was held Friday, February 12, at Valhalla Memory Gardens with Pastor O. Wendell Davis officiating.



ROYAL FUNERAL HOME

4315 Oakwood Avenue
Huntsville, AL 35810 - (256) 534-8481

Graveside service for MR. BARON EDMUND COWAN (b. 1939) will be 11:00 a.m., Sunday, February 21, at the Oakwood Memorial Gardens (1 H.L. Cleveland Way Huntsville, Ala.) with Dr. Carlton P. Byrd officiating.

Funeral service for MS. GLENDA FAYE BRAKE WARD (b. 1955) was held Tuesday, February 16, at the Royal Chapel of Memories with Brother Floyd Rogers officiating.

Graveside service for MOTHER BIRDIE LEE WOODS (b. 1942) was held Tuesday, February 16, at the Pleasant Grove Cemetery (15439 Hastings Road, Athens, Ala.) with Pastor James Robinson, Sr., officiating.

Graveside service for MS. NATASHA LYNN LOCKETT (b. 1980) was held Monday, February 15, at Madison Memory Gardens (100 Hughes Road, Madison, Ala.) with Pastor James Robinson, Sr. officiating.

SERENITY FUNERAL HOME

2505 University Drive NW
Huntsville, AL 35816 - (256) 539-9693

Funeral services will be announced at a later date for SKYLAN ANN-MARIE WINTERS (b. 2015); BARBARA ANN WASHINGTON; ALAINA SIMS (b. 1989); JAMES ZUBER; MILLER HENSLEY; GAIL KIMBROUGH; and other beloved ones.

The Valley Weekly

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The Valley Weekly
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Fourth Page	5x5 inches	\$200
Eighth Page	2.5x5 inches	\$100
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Commissioner Edwards Announces Virtual COVID-19 Panel Discussion

District 6 Commissioner Violet Edwards has announced a COVID-19 Vaccine “Facts vs. Fiction” virtual panel discussion on Sunday, February 21, at 4 p.m. CST. The panel, hosted by Dr. Valerie Greene, Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences, will allow medical experts to engage with the community on the science and confidence in the COVID-19 vaccine.

“More than ever, it is vital



recover, the more we thrive!”

The third partner, #NOWINCLUDED backed by Acclimate, is a multi-generational healthcare move-

Panel members will address:

- Real accounts from front line workers
- Vaccine hesitancy in the community
- Why should I take the vaccine?



Dr. Gregory Pettaway
ER Physician
Huntsville Hospital



Ms. Stacy Langford
ER Nursing Director
Huntsville Hospital



Dr. David Hicks
Deputy Health Officer
Jefferson County



Dr. Valerie Green
Moderator
Ala. Dept. of Forensic Sciences

that we continue to help educate friends, family, and the community on how to keep themselves and their loved ones safe,” said Commissioner Edwards. “This panel is designed to help the experts directly engage with our community on a number of issues and to answer pressing questions and concerns about the vaccine.”

President Ovetta Hobson of Huntsville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., a community partner, notes, “With vaccines now available, it is very important that we become informed and educated. The more we learn, the more we know; the more we know, the more we recover; the more we

ment that engages, educates, and empowers minority populations to take control of their health. Program Director of #NOWINCLUDED, Rosemary Robinson, notes the importance of these discussions stating, “With vaccine hesitancy at an all-time high, programs like this are critical to keeping our community healthy.”

Guest panelists will include Dr. Gregory Pettaway, ER physician, Huntsville Hospital; Stacy Langford, ER nursing director, Huntsville Hospital; and Dr. David Hicks, Deputy Health officer for Jefferson County. Registration is free and can be completed at nowincluded.com/vaccine.

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November–March: Tuesday – Saturday: 10am – 4pm & Sunday: noon – 4pm

AAMU, IBM Form Tech Collaboration

Students majoring in the STEM disciplines at historic Alabama A&M University are getting an extra boost, thanks to a new collaboration between AAMU and IBM.

The University and the more than century-old high-technology company are teaming to provide special software and related expertise to support faculty and students in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. The collaboration invites Alabama A&M to be a part of the IBM Academic Initiative, the IBM Skills Academy and related IBM awards.

The IBM Academic Initiative offers professors and students access to the latest technologies in open source and IBM software, hardware, and many other resources. Similarly, the IBM Skills Academy is a worldwide program that works through university faculty to provide students job market advantages.

“Alabama A&M University is excited about the possibilities that this offers faculty to enhance our

academic programs,” said AAMU President Andrew Hugine, Jr. “IBM is a leader in the tech sector, and the University is excited to be a part of this initiative to incorporate cutting-edge technology into our curriculum.”

Because of the collaboration, AAMU faculty and students will now have opportunities to earn badge certificates in such key areas as artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, Internet of things, quantum computing, data science, cloud computing, design thinking and blockchain. Thus, the program is designed to develop diverse and high demand skill sets that align with industry needs and trends, so both students and faculty can develop the skills they need today for the jobs of tomorrow.

“Equal access to skills and jobs is the key to unlocking economic opportunity and prosperity for diverse populations,” said Valinda Scarbro Kennedy, HBCU program lead, IBM Global University Programs. “IBM is deeply committed to helping HBCU students build

their skills to better prepare for the future of work. Through this collaboration, A&M students will have an opportunity to gain modern skills in emerging technologies across hybrid cloud, quantum and AI, so they can be better prepared for the future of work in the digital economy.”

AAMU is the top producer of African American STEM graduates in Alabama and among the top three nationally among all Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The University offers degrees in multiple STEM disciplines, including computer science and various engineering programs.

“This collaboration will not only enhance our academic capabilities,” added Dr. Archie Tucker, AAMU’s vice president for marketing, communication and advancement, “but it can also create a more marketable student and provide us with an even better competitive recruiting advantage when seeking prospective students.”

For more information, visit www.aamu.edu.

Church Schedules Virtual Women’s Day

The Fellowship Presbyterian Women invite the public to the Annual Women’s Day Celebration (Virtually) on Sunday, March 7, at 10 a.m.

The event theme is “Celebrate the Gifts of Women: Women on a Mission: Changing Our Communities Through Matthew 25 Vision.”

The scheduled guest min-

ister is Ruling Elder Elona Street-Stewart, Co-Moderator of 224th General Assembly, Presbyterian Church USA.

Mary Mitchell serves as moderator of Presbyterian Women. Reverend Gregory J. Bentley is pastor and co-moderator of the 224th General Assembly, Fellowship Presbyterian Church USA.



“Love makes your soul crawl out from its hiding place.”

- Zora Neale Hurston

Alabamian WILL MASTIN

Leader of the Will Mastin Trio

Will Mastin, the leader of the famous Will Mastin Trio, was born in Madison, Ala., on June 20, 1878, to a single mother named Sally Mastin, according to an 1880 census report.

The Will Mastin Trio included Sammy Davis Sr. and his son Sammy Davis Jr. Mastin was also the “uncle” of Sammy Davis Jr., as the older Sammy and Mastin were good friends.

The original members of the Trio were Sammy Davis Sr., Howard M. Colbert Jr., and Will Mastin. Sometimes Sammy Jr. would join them on stage when he was a little boy, beginning when he was only age 3.

Colbert was Sammy Jr.’s tap-dance teacher and also treated the child like an uncle. However, Colbert left the Trio in December 1941 to join the United States Army when the United States declared war on Germany during World War II.

Sammy Davis Jr. was 16 years old at this time and became part of the main vaudeville act, replacing Colbert. Mastin and the Sammy Jr. and Sammy Sr. performed in the 1947 musical short film “Sweet and Low” and the 1956



Will Mastin Trio: Sammy Davis Sr., Sammy Davis Jr., and Will Mastin

Broadway musical “Mr. Wonderful.”

According to reports, the three performed from the 1920s through the 1960s. However, the trio stopped performing when Sammy Davis Jr. was called to serve in the Army in 1943, but resumed in Portland, Ore., after the end of the War. Even when Sammy Davis Jr.’s solo career was successful, during the 1950s and 1960s, he still performed occasionally with his father and uncle as the Will Mastin Trio, typically giving them billing on his shows and singles.

In 1953, Sammy Davis Jr. was offered his own television show on ABC. He was still under contract with Will Mastin, so the show was intended to be called “Three for the Road — with the Will Mastin Trio.”

According to Wikipedia reports, the network spent \$20,000 filming the pilot, which presented African Americans as struggling musicians, as opposed to “the usual slapstick comedy or stereotypical mammy roles of the time.”

The cast included Frances Davis, who was the first black ballerina to perform for the Paris Opera, actresses Ruth Attaway and Jane White, and Frederick O’Neal who founded the American Negro Theater. But the network couldn’t get a sponsor, so the show was dropped.

Will Mastin died on March 14, 1979, at age 100, according to the California Death Index. He is interred at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California, near Sammy Davis Sr. and Sammy Davis Jr. in the Davis family tomb.

- Wikipedia.org

Washington in One Minute



Here are the happenings in Washington, D.C., this week:

1. **ON THE FLOOR.** The House and Senate were in recess this week for the Presidents' Day Holiday, but committees still held virtual hearings this week. After a 5-day impeachment trial last week, the Senate on Saturday (Feb. 13) failed to convict former President Trump for the second time in 12 months on a vote of 57 Senators voting "guilty" to 43 voting "not guilty" (67 votes were needed to convict). 7 GOP Senators joined all 50 Democrats voting guilty: Sens. Burr (R-NC), Cassidy (R-LA), Collins (R-ME), Murkowski (R-AK), Romney (R-UT), Sasse (R-NE), and Toomey (R-PA).

2. **BIDEN 100 DAYS.** On Tuesday night at 8 p.m. EST, President Biden traveled to Milwaukee, Wis., to participate in a Town Hall event aired live from the Pabst Theater hosted by the CNN Network and moderated by Anderson Cooper. On Thursday, he traveled to Portage, Mich., (near Kalamazoo) to meet with employees at the Pfizer plant where COVID vaccines are manufactured. Last Wednesday, the Biden Administration transmitted a letter to the U.S. Supreme Court reversing the previous administration's opposition to the Affordable Care Act (also known as Obamacare), which had urged the court to strike down the law in its entirety when it hands down its decision this year in California v. Texas.

3. **COVID RELIEF BILL.** Last week, nine (9) House committees worked expeditiously to approve their por-

tions of the Biden Administration's \$1.9 trillion COVID relief bill as part of the budget reconciliation process. These individual bills are due to the House Budget Committee by

Tuesday (Feb. 16), which will then combine the bills into a single Reconciliation bill, which will be taken up on the House floor next week. Some observers have speculated that the House-passed Reconciliation bill (which will include direct payments of \$1400 and a \$15 minimum wage) may bypass the Senate committees and be brought directly to Senate floor in order to be sent to the President for his signature by the March 14 target date.

4. **CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS.** The new Punchbowl News site reports that Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), the new Chairs of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, will announce as early as next week that - after a ban of 10 years - Democrats will reinstate congressionally-added projects (commonly referred to as "earmarks") in the FY2022 spending bills. These earmarks will be limited to state and local governments and nonprofits that carry out quasi-government functions.

5. **FEDERAL DEBT/GDP.** Last Thursday, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) announced that America's federal debt, which at \$21 trillion was at 100% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020, will continue an upward trend and be at 102% of GDP in 2021

- which is the first time since the aftermath of World War II in 1946. The large increase in debt is primarily due to the \$4 trillion that has been spent by the federal government on the coronavirus pandemic since March 2020 and does not take into account the possible addition of a new \$1.9 trillion COVID relief bill and a possible infrastructure/stimulus bill.

6. **COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADVOCACY.** Last week, Hamm Consulting Group joined Lansing Community College for the annual Association of Community College Trustees National Legislative Summit. The 2021 virtual conference provided the opportunity for college leaders and policymakers to discuss federal priorities and advocacy for community colleges. Hamm Consulting and Lansing CC were also joined by First Lady Dr. Jill Biden, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and a host of other congressional lawmakers along with leaders from the Biden Administration who shared their agendas for higher education and workforce development.

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