

River City Receives Important Grant - p. 8

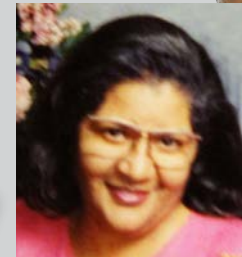
FREE

"A Sacrifice for Lent?" - p. 5



Friday
 March 22, 2024
 Vol. 10, No. 29
 ValleyWeeklyllc.com

SALUTE!
 Rosetta James Foundation
 ELDER OF THE WEEK



Mrs. Carolyn Rice Florence

The Valley Weekly

GLORIA B: "So Close Yet So Far" - p. 5

"I can be changed by what happens to me. But I refuse to be reduced by it." - Maya Angelou

AKAs Hold 65th Annual Debutante Presentation & Ball

The Epsilon Gamma Omega Chapter recently hosted the much anticipated "Evolving with Time: An Evening of Moments

tion and Ball at the Von Bruan Center Saturn Ballroom.

Twenty-nine (29) young ladies were introduced to society as Debutantes.

array of live music, Multimedia Showcase, Digital Ads Presentation, Cotillion and Scholarship presentations. A highlight of the



Sitting (l-r): Destinee Buford, Freedom Gurley, Mylah Carey, Myah Draper. Standing (l-r): Miracle Burwell, Jayda Davis, Nadia Coleman, Leah Cole, Taylor Hampton

program was the attendance and recognition of Mrs. Sylvia Sledge Flakes as one of the first Debutantes presented

to Remember" 65th Debutante Presenta-

The prestigious event included an

in 1958. A special tribute was given



Sitting (l-r): Reagan Kirk, Bria Howard, Alayna Harvey, Maya Harvey. Standing (l-r): Trinity James, Joy Hawkins, Taylor Hicks, Hayden Houston, Raya Leonard, Jillian Liner

to Mrs. Fannie Pulley Thompson who passed away in February 2024. She was a Charter Member of Epsilon Gamma Omega and a 75-year Diamond Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

The Debutante Ball is the culmination of a season of Personal Enhancement Training Sessions, Community Service Projects, Multimedia Projects and other special activities.

This year's event

was led by a mother-daughter team, Chair-

Scholarships were awarded to Debutante Jayda Davis, Debutante Faith Warner, Debutante

participated in the digital ad campaign received an educational stipend. Multimedia



Sitting (l-r): Berkeley Preer, Makayla Richardson, Kendall Snodgrass, Ava Turner. Standing (l-r): Madelyn Stovall, Kierra Patterson, Chloe McElroy, Sydney Snodgrass, Faith Warner, Hannah Stanley

man, Shirley B. Clemons and Co-Chairman, Latoyia M. Clemons, a former Debutante. The Chapter President is Tonya S. Wood.

Raya Leonard, Debutante Miracle Burwell. In addition to the scholarships, Debutantes that

Project Awards were given to Debutante Trinity James, Debutante Berke-

Continued on Page 7

Arts Huntsville Set to Announce 2024 Panoply Arts Festival

Panoply Arts Festival, presented by Mazada Toyota Manufacturing, is ready to takeover Big Spring Park again this spring!

Reporters and enthusiasts were set to join Arts Huntsville as the organization released festival details to the public

on Thursday, March 21, at 10 a.m. at the Huntsville/Madison County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle was scheduled to join Allison Dillon-Jauken, Executive Director of Arts Huntsville, to unveil the official

2024 poster art. In addition, special programming announcements will include over 30 regional bands and musicians, hands-on STEAM and art activities, the crowd-favorite Art Marketplace, and a large-scale community art project.

Panoply, the Southeast's premier arts weekend, where Huntsville's innovative spark shines through a festival of art, music, and more, will be held April 26th - 28th in Downtown Huntsville's Big Spring Park. This year will mark the

42nd anniversary of Huntsville's largest downtown event.

For more information about Arts Huntsville, visit www.artshuntsville.org and follow us on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram @artshuntsville.

The Valley Weekly

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Publisher

The Valley Weekly, LLC

Editor-in-Chief

Dorothy W. Huston, Ph.D.

**Editorial Consultant/
Senior Editor**

Jerome Saintjones, Ed.S.

Editorial AssistantsLinda Burruss
Phyllis Chunn
Gary T. Whitley, Jr.**Advertising Associate**

Phyllis Chunn

- Contributing Editors -tim allston
Lamar A. Braxton, Jr.
Minister Preston Brown
Gloria B. Caldwell
Ron Hamm
Margaret Kelly, Ph.D.
Gary T. Whitley, Jr.**Website Administrator**

Calvin Farier

Mailing Address:The Valley Weekly
2204 Whitesburg Drive- Suite 220
Huntsville, AL 35801
(256) 651-9028
www.valleyweeklyllc.com
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The Valley Weekly

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The Valley Weekly
Washington
One Minute

by Ron Hamm

Here is what's happening in Washington, D.C., the nation's capital, this week:

1. CONGRESS. The House and Senate are in session this week (before adjourning on Friday for the 2-week Spring Recess). This Friday, March 22, is the deadline to enact the final 6 FY2024 appropriations bills to avert a partial federal gov't shutdown, including the Defense, Homeland Security, Labor/HHS/Education, State/Foreign Ops, Financial Services/Gen Govt and Leg Branch bills. The House will take up bills to prohibit the Biden Administration from imposing a fracking moratorium and to repeal the \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (created by the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act). The

conservative website The Bulwark reported last week that a group of 31 former House Republicans

sent a letter to House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) urging him to take up the Ukraine aid bill as soon as possible.
2. THE WHITE HOUSE. From Monday through Wednesday, President Biden was on the campaign trail with stops in Las Vegas and Reno, Nev., and Phoenix, Ariz. He raised more than \$53 million in February and has \$155 million cash-on-hand. The campaign also reported that the President raised \$10 million in the 24 hours after his State of the Union Address on March 7. (NOTE: the Trump campaign's February figures have not been released. At the end of January, his two major committees had just \$36.6 million in cash on hand and those

committees collectively spent more than they took in that month).

3. SUPREME COURT. The Supreme Court heard oral argument Monday in the case of National Rifle Association v. Vullo as to whether the NRA's right to freedom of speech was violated by a New York official who urged banks and insurance companies to cut ties with the NRA shortly after the 2018 Parkland (Fla.) school shooting that killed 17 students and staff. Last Friday in a unanimous opinion, the court ruled in a pair of cases in Michigan and California that public officials who post topics relating to their work on their personal social media accounts can be held liable for violating the First Amendment when they block their critics.
4. FEDERAL RESERVE MEETING. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the Federal Reserve's Federal Open Market Committee met and announced the target Federal Funds rate March 20 at 2 p.m.

EDT. The current target range is 5.25% to 5.5% and that is not expected to change, but the market will be looking for clues on expected 2024 rate cuts. Last Tuesday, the Labor Department announced that the consumer price index increased 0.4% in February and 3.2% from a year ago. The monthly measure was in line with expectations while the 12-month reading was slightly higher (a 2.3% increase in energy costs was the main culprit). The closely watched core CPI, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, rose 0.4% on the month and was up 3.8% on the year. Both were one-tenth of a percentage point higher than forecast.

5. FAFSA. Last week, the U.S. Education Department (ED) issued an electronic announcement (EA) containing several updates on the 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). ED first announced a long-awaited fix allowing students with parents or contributors

without a Social Security number (SSN) to complete their FAFSA electronically. Since the new FAFSA launched in late December, there have been several glitches and technical challenges, including one that has prevented contributors without an SSN from starting or accessing the FAFSA form. These students should now be able to complete the form electronically and have the same user experience as other students and contributors, with a few bugs that still need to be fixed. ED is continuing to address these issues. In the meantime, colleges are encouraged to reach out to students and families who have not been able to complete the form due to these issues, including those who submitted a FAFSA using a previously announced temporary workaround.

Hamm Consulting Group
300 New Jersey Ave, NW Suite 900
Washington D.C. 20001
T: 202-596-8384
rhamm@hammconsulting.com

Drake State's Workforce Development Efforts Highlighted in Times Square

The Drake State Community and Technical College family has expressed excitement about Amesite featuring its partnership with the two-year school on the NASDAQ Tower in Times Square!

This partnership represents a strategic move for Drake State, allowing it to extend its educational reach beyond traditional classroom settings. It aligns with the college's commitment to working with regional businesses and addressing local workforce learning needs.

Amesite Inc. (NASDAQ:

AMST), a key artificial intelligence software company offering a cloud-based learning platform for business and education markets, announced last December a five-year partnership with Drake.

Dr. Ann Marie Sastry,



CEO of Amesite, commented on the new partnership. "NAFEO, as the Nation's only advocacy and membership organization for all

HBCUs and predominantly Black institutions, has created an efficient and effective way of engaging the most economically significant cohort of institutions that impact workforce diversity in the United States. We are proud to be part of this Alliance,

and to work with members like Drake State. This collaboration is an important step for us in Alabama. Our goal is to extend our learning solutions to NAFEO's members. This agreement with Drake State is an important part of our commitment to enhancing education through technology."

Dr. Lezli Baskerville, CEO of NAFEO, said,

"The Alliance that we have established with Amesite is yielding favorable results. During this season in particular, when it is so critical for professionals to have certifications that enable them to advance economically, we are looking forward to engaging other NAFEO members, including 106 HBCUs and roughly 70 PBIs. To engage the most diverse cohort possible, NAFEO and our members must be effective online, delivering 95% retention with Amesite technology."

"Partnering with Amesite enables us to expand our educational capabilities and reach," said Dr. Patricia Sims, president of Drake State, when the announcement was first made in 2023. "This collaboration

aligns with our goal to meet and adapt to the changing educational and workforce training requirements in our community."

The partnership will focus on developing customized learning platforms to meet the specific needs of the regional workforce, offering accessible and high-quality educational resources to support professional development and skills enhancement.

"As you enter positions of trust and power, dream a little before you think."

- Toni Morrison

THE VALLEY WEEKLY
VALLEY DEATHS



SERENITY FUNERAL HOME

2505 University Drive NW
Huntsville, AL 35816 (256) 539-9693
www.serenityfuneralhm.com

Funeral service for MR. GLENN SHEAD (b. 1953) was held Monday, March 18, at Serenity Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for MR. DEXTER FRANKLIN JR. (b. 1982) was held Saturday, March 16, at St. Rebecca Primitive Baptist Church, 330 Grimwood Road, Hazel Green, Ala.

NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

2501 Carmichael Avenue NW
Huntsville, AL 35816 - (256) 539-8189 - www.nelmsmemorial.net

Graveside service for MR. JIMMY DRAKE (b. 1954) was held Tuesday, March 19, in the Blutcher's Ford Cemetery, Oscar Patterson Road, New Market, Ala.

Funeral service for MR. VINCENT BATTLES (b. 1954) was Monday, March 18, at Blue Spring Road Church of Christ, 2150 Blue Spring Road NW - Huntsville, Ala.

Funeral service for MR. AL E. BURTON (b. 1949) was Sunday, March 17, at 12 noon at First Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1303 Evangel Drive, Huntsville, Ala.

Funeral service for MS. HELEN TURNER (b. 1935) was Thursday, March 14, in the Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel with The Reverend Martino Wynn officiating.

ROYAL FUNERAL HOME

4315 Oakwood Avenue NW
Huntsville, AL 35810 - (256) 534-8481 - www.royalfh.com

The funeral service for MR. JAMES ARNOLD STEELE (b. 1946) was Wednesday, March 20, at the Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Church, 380 Indian Creek Road NW, Huntsville, Ala., with Pastor Timothy Rainey officiating.

The funeral service for MS. LINDA LOUISE BAPTIST-DECLOUETTE (b. 1950) was Tuesday, March 19, at the Royal Chapel of Memories.

The funeral service for MR. MELVIN BERNARD BURRESS, SR. (b. 1951) was Saturday, March 16, at the Eagles Nest Ministries Church, 6831 Hollow Road NW, Huntsville, Ala., with Bishop Daniel Richardson officiating.

The funeral service for MR. STEVEN ANDERSON MILTON (b. 1973) was Saturday, March 16, at the Saint Bartley Primitive Baptist Church, 3020 Belafonte Avenue NW, Huntsville, Ala., with Pastor Jaymes Mooney officiating.

The Valley Weekly
Spiritual Game Plan
PRESTON BROWN'S



"Thy Will Be Done"

Matthew 26: 39 says, "Going a little further, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.'"

Have you ever been caught between what you want and what God wants for your life? Have you ever had such a difficult decision that you wanted God to show you another way?

I believe that God gives us all certain assignments that He wants us to complete, as He did with Jesus, His one and only son. This was a very difficult decision because Jesus was being asked to take on the sins of the whole world—not just the sins of our country or the sins of our continent, but the sins of the whole world. This had to have been an enormous task, but aren't you glad that Jesus chose to complete His assignment? Where would

we be if He had not become the savior of the whole world?

Some assignments are easier to handle, like getting a new job or deciding to be a coach for your son's football team. However, some assignments are more difficult, like planting a church or going into ministry or being a caretaker for an elderly person.

Whatever assignment God has given to you, I pray that you complete your assignment. I also pray that His will be done for your life. Even if you have to struggle, I pray that God gives you the strength to struggle.

Even if you have to endure some pain, I pray that God gives you the



strength to endure the pain. Even if you have your doubts, like Jesus did, I pray that God gives you the strength to overcome your doubts.

May God grant you spiritual success with completing the assignment that He has given you.

Question: What assignment has God given you that seemed too much for you to bear?

Stay encouraged my brothers and sisters and make sure you purchase a copy of my books, *Spiritual Game Plans For A Successful Life* and *A Champion Game Plan for Life*, at amazon.com, or Westbow Books.

NEXT WEEK:
"Learning How to Love One Another"

"Sometimes, what you're looking for is already there."

- Aretha Franklin

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Valley Weekly
VALLEY
EVENTS
 HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

March 22-24

The 4th Annual Women's Expo Huntsville
 Von Braun Center
 Huntsville, Ala.

March 29

Teacher Professional Development
 Huntsville Museum of Art
 Downtown Huntsville
 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

March 30

Rocket City Comedy Festival
 Mark C. Smith Concert Hall
 Von Braun Center
 Huntsville, Ala.
 8 p.m.

April 6

Lynyrd Skynyrd & ZZ Top
 Propst Arena
 Von Braun Center
 7 p.m.

April 12-14

Monster Jam
 Propst Arena
 Von Braun Center
 Huntsville, Ala.

May 4

Donate Life Alabama
 Donor Dash for Life 5K
 Veterans Park
 Hoover, Ala.
 8 a.m.

May 10

Exhale Huntsville - A Mother's Love Girls Night Out
 Huemanity Studio
 Huntsville, Ala.
 7 p.m.

May 18-19

Rocket City BBQ & Soul Fest
 National Speleological Society

Atty. Lilienthal Receives 4th P.I. Distinction

Atty. Morris Lilienthal of Martinson & Beason, PC has been recommended as one of the Top 3 personal injury lawyers in Huntsville, Ala., by ThreeBestRated.com.

This year's honor makes his fourth year in a row receiving the distinction. Three Best Rated has the honor of helping 4.5 million customers each month find the best businesses in key cities, using a 50-point inspection.

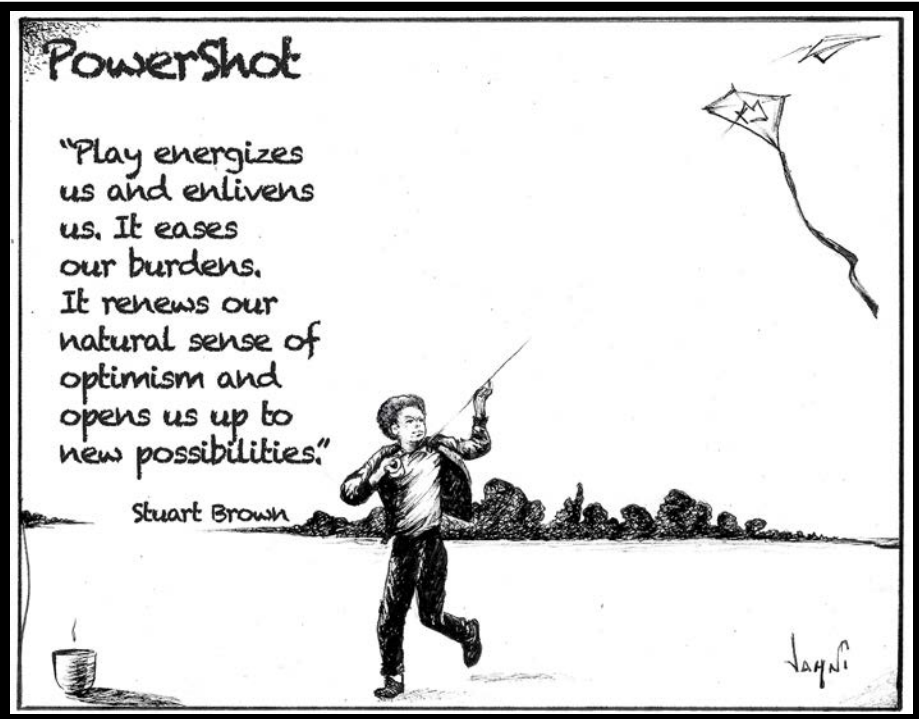


ON THIS DAY



The Spanish legislature passed a law abolishing slavery in the colony of Puerto Rico. The decree mandated that although slaves were legally "free," they were forced to compensate their former owners for the loss of their "property" by paying for their freedom with three years of labor.

- bet.com



"Life is like a game of poker: If you don't put any in the pot, there won't be any to take out."

- Moms Mabley

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drakestate.edu

"Great leaders never accept the world as it was and always work for the world as it should be."

- Condoleezza Rice

MARCH 22 - STEPHANIE DORTHEA MILLS - Stephanie Dortehea Mills is an American singer, songwriter and actress. Mills rose to stardom as "Dorothy" in the original Broadway run of the musical *The Wiz* from 1975 to 1977. The song "Home" from the show later became a Number 1 U.S. R&B hit for Mills and her signature song. During the 1980s, Mills scored five Number 1 R&B hits, including "Home", "I Have Learned to Respect the Power of Love", "I Feel Good All Over", "(You're Puttin') A Rush on Me" and "Something in the Way (You Make Me Feel)". Mills' won a Grammy Award for Best Female R&B Vocal Performance for her song "Never Knew Love Like This Before" in 1981.

- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.org



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So Close Yet So Far Away ...

Millennial Moment by Gloria B. Caldwell

So Close Yet So Far ...

lessons you've gained and make another attempt...it's over?" Who said you weren't allowed to pivot?

See, the way I see it is if there is a chance to do it again, better, wiser, more prepared... it's not over! So the saying should be, "So close, reset, pivot, and keep pressing!" If it is not the end all, be all. The final song, the last hurrah, then there is still time!

This saying, I remember, when I was younger. The meaning: is when you have got very close to achieving what you wanted, but in the end you just failed. But, here's the kicker. Who decided that was the end? Had life ended? Who reserved to right to end the quest for that which you wanted to achieve? Who said, "You can't use the



There is another race you need to suit up for, because you

in the next round! But, unless you keep going, you'll never know!

may not be in first place in these races leading up to the prize, but, as you get stronger and better, you may win bigger

Don't stop! Don't give over! Keep pressing! Go harder! Dig in!! Better is waiting for you! You're so close...get closer!

God loves you, and so do I.

He has given you a gift; open it.

Huntsville Council Meetings



Huntsville City Council's regular meetings are held in the City Council Chambers of the Municipal Building on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 6 p.m.

Council work sessions are also held in the Chambers of the Municipal Building on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. For more information, call (256) 427-5011.

"No matter how far a person can go, the horizon is still way beyond you."

- Zora Neale Hurston

This Sunday's Lectionary



Sunday, March 24, 2024

Sunday of the Passion:
Palm Sunday

The Liturgy of the Psalms
Mark 11:1-11
or John 12:12-16
Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

(Track 2, Year B)

First Lesson:

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16

Second Lesson:

Philippians 2:5-11

GOSPEL:

Mark 14:1 - 15:47



A Sacrifice for Lent? Try "Worrying"

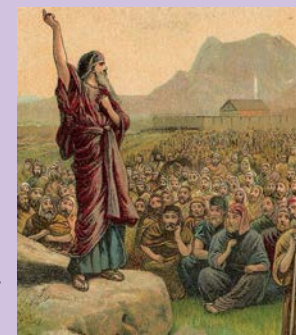
"Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" - Isaiah 43:19

Years ago, I received this email to help me overcome worrying - hopefully, it'll do the same for you.

God commanded Moses to lead the Children of Israel from 400 years of Egyptian slavery and into the desert. For 40 years, these 2 to 3 million people had to be transported, fed, and housed. *But how?*

According to an email credited to a Quartermaster General of the U. S. Army, it was reported that:

1. For Moses to cross the Red Sea in one night (Exodus 14:20), there had to be a space 3 miles wide for them to walk 5,000 abreast;
2. Each time they camped at the day's end, a campground two-thirds the size of the state of Rhode Island was required, or 750 square miles long;
3. Each day, Moses needed 1500 tons of food from two freight trains, each at least a mile long!
4. Then, 4000 tons of wood for daily cooking - for 40 years;
5. Water for drinking and washing? 11,000,000 gallons daily and another freight train with tank cars, 1800 miles long!



Do you think Moses figured all this out before he left Egypt? No!

Moses trusted God to take care of these things for him.

Does God have any problem taking care of all your and my needs?

Then stop worrying, and ask God to bless you for today.

During the annual 40-day Lenten season, Christians are encouraged to sacrifice such pleasures as sweets, meat, or anything that would prevent them from gaining a better view of Jesus's sacrifice.

Therefore, join me this 2024 Lenten season in giving up the "pleasures" or comforts of worrying. It just doesn't work.

Tim Allston

Leadership Player-Coach & Four-time Amazon Best-Selling Author - Leading from the Middle
www.timallston.com - (256) 212-0949

OU Student to Be Honored by CSF in Chattanooga

The Carson Scholars Fund (CSF) is proud to introduce the 2024 class of alumni who are entering the CSF's Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame was started in 2016 to honor outstanding Carson Scholar Alumni for success and excellence in the workforce, who have excelled academically and/or who have made signifi-

cant contributions in their communities.

Hall of Fame member, 7-time Carson Scholar, and current Oakwood University student, Matthew Dormus, will be honored at the Chattanooga Awards Banquet on Sunday, April 14, 2024.

To learn more about the Carson Scholars Fund Hall

of Fame members and their remarkable accomplishments, visit our website at <https://carsonscholars.org/scholarships/hall-of-fame-members/>. The Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity founded in 1994 by now retired Johns Hopkins pediatric neurosurgeon, Dr. Benjamin Carson, and his wife, Candy.



Lakeside UMC to Hold Historic, Celebratory Service

Dr. Randy B. Kelley, pastor, and members of Lakeside United Methodist Church, 3738 Meridian Street, Huntsville, Ala. will host a historic and celebratory worship service on Sunday, April 7, during the 11 a.m. worship hour.

For Lakeside members, in particular, it is time to celebrate and make known a milestone in the history

of the church--the burning of the mortgage.

The announcement of the milestone is not a celebration of their diligence, but it is a celebration of the unwavering faithfulness of our Savior.

The Celebratory Message will be proclaimed by Rev. Cromwell Handy, pastor, The Church of Montgomery in Montgomery,

Ala. Handy is the former pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery.

Rev. Sherrill Clontz, Northeast District Superintendent of the United Methodist Church, will be a special guest.

The public is invited to attend.



Rosetta James Foundation "Spotlight on Our Elders" ... Featuring

Mrs. Carolyn Rice Florence

Carolyn Rice Florence has shared her message of social etiquette for over 50 years with all age groups. As a self-made businesswoman and community volunteer, she has championed the art of social graces.

Florence's quest to transform average people into models of respectful behavior began in the 1960s with her class, "Fascinating Womanhood," which taught females the finer points of being women.

Wanting to expand her knowledge base, Florence used a mix of college and specialty courses to broaden her own education. Florence studied clothing textile and merchandising at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich.; and family and consumer sciences and public relations at

Faith Grant College in Birmingham, Ala.

She was mentored by Maxine Powell, a Motown talent agent and American Etiquette instructor, and Letitia Baldrige, Jacqueline Kennedy's social secretary.

She received certifications from the National Children's Etiquette Society and Huntsville's Neil Bryant Modeling and Charm School and Tiffany's Academy of Personal Development.

She also trained and worked as a make-up artist for Fashion Fair Cosmetics.

A Christian who believes in service, Florence makes time to volunteer throughout Huntsville and Northern Alabama. She has been honored for her work with the United Negro College Fund (UNCF); North Alabama's



Food Bank; W.C. Handy Head Start Program; Huntsville City Public Schools' Indian Education Program; and the SAVSS program at Oakwood University Church.

Florence shares her life with Emmett Florence, her husband of 57 years, two adult children and two grandchildren, a large extended family, Oakwood University Church members, and a host of citizens who have been transformed under her tutelage.

"Spotlight on Our Elders" is a weekly feature sponsored by the Rosetta James Foundation to promote volunteerism and activism in our community among those who are 70-plus. The Foundation also provides scholarships. Learn more about us at www.rosettajamesfoundation.org. Know an outstanding elder (70+) that you would like to see featured? Send us a photo and 250-word write-up to info@valleyweeklyllc.com.

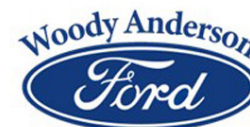


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AKAs Hold 65th Annual Debutante Presentation & Ball

Continued from Page 1



Eva Mobley Cathey Award (l): Debutante Ava Turner; Multimedia Project Winners r-l: First Place, Debutante Trinity James, First Place Debutante Berkeley Preer, Second Place, Debutante Miracle Burwell.

ley Preer, and Debutante Miracle Burwell. The Eva Mobley Cathey Award was presented to Debutante Ava Turner.

Epsilon Gamma Omega Chapter was chartered on March 19, 1949, on the campus of Alabama A&M University. Through the years, chapter activities have been centered around programs geared to the needs of the community, and compatible with the

program of the International body. With a commitment to excellence, the Chapter strives to create memorable experiences that resonate with the community.

The 2024 Epsilon Gamma Debutantes included the following: Destinee Buford, Miracle Burwell, Mylah Carey, Leah Cole, Nadia Coleman, Jayda Davis, Myah Draper,



This year's event was led by a mother-daughter team, Shirley B. Clemons, chair (r), and Co-Chair Latoyia M. Clemons (l), a former Debutante. The Chapter President is Tonya S. Wood (c).

Freedom Gurley, Taylor Hampton, Alayna Harvey, Maya Harvey, Joy Hawkins, Taylor Hicks, Hayden Houston, Bria Howard, Trinity James, Reagan Kirk, Raya Leonard, Jillian Liner, Chloe McElroy, Kierra Patterson, Berkeley Preer, Makayla Richardson, Kendall Snodgrass, Sydney Snodgrass, Hannah Stanley, Madelyn Stovall, Ava Turner and Faith Warner.



Scholarship Winners l-r: First Place, Debutante Jayda Davis, Second Place, Debutante Faith Warner, Third Place Debutante Raya Leonard, HBCU Scholarship, Debutante Miracle Burwell

Celebrating 75 Years of Sisterhood and Service

The city's social calendar sparkled with a weekend of stellar events, as Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated – Epsilon Gamma Omega Chapter and Gammu Mu Chapters celebrated 75 years of outstanding service in the Huntsville/Madison County area, the South Eastern region, and across the world.

In celebration of 75 years of service and sisterhood, the Epsilon Gamma Omega Chapter hosted a “Pearls and Pretty Girls Sunset Soiree” on Friday, March 15, The Royal at Stovehouse Event Center was transformed into a haven of glamour and panache. Attendees indulged in a sophisticated evening filled with music, delectable hors d'oeuvres, and fantastic company.

The grand finale event commenced on Saturday, March 16, at The Legends Ball: Diamond Jubilee of Legends - Celebrating 75 Years of Soaring to Greater Heights. The black-tie event was held at the Von Braun Center Saturn Ballroom, replete with an extraordinary, memorable, and monumental evening that honored “Living Legends”. The event included live music and entertainment, dinner, and dancing.

Sponsorships were available and were dedicated to scholarships and service programs that allow empower and upliftment in the community.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated – Epsilon Gamma Omega Chapter and Gammu Chapter was chartered on March 19, 1949 on the campus of Alabama A&M University.

Over the decades, chapter events have focused on activities designed to meet the needs of the surrounding community, as well as that are compatible with the aims of the international body. Striving for excellence, the Chapter works to create meaningful experiences that positively impact the community.

For additional information, contact Courtney Battle, publicity chair, at (256) 520-4485 or email courtney_m.battle@yahoo.com.

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JAMES F SMITH & ASSOCIATES
256-852-7310
415 CHURCH ST NW BUILDING B
HUNTSVILLE
jamesfsmith@allstate.com



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Decatur Receives \$18.4M 'Reconnecting Communities' Grant

The Singing River Trail is thrilled to announce the approval of the City of Decatur's and Singing River Trail's \$18.4 million Reconnecting Communities grant. This investment will pave the way in reviving the economy within the disadvantaged communities of Old Town Decatur.

The project will fund the construction of the Dr. Bill Sims Hike-Bike Way/Singing River Trail from Point Malard to Old Town, totaling 8.77 miles.

This trail will include a safe bike and pedestrian greenway system and serve as a vital link to key landmarks such as Rhodes Ferry, Deadman's Alley on Bank Street, Etta Freeman Park, Scottsboro Boys Civil Rights Museum and the Judge Horton Home, Old Town Historic District, Ingles Harbor, and Malone Park.

The project holds particular significance in reconnecting Old Town, a historically significant African American district, to the rest of Decatur. It represents a step toward honoring the community's heritage and providing new opportunities for Old Town residents.

"We are thrilled and committed to the vision for a more connected and accessible Decatur," said Anna Clem, Singing River Trail Associate Director. "We are grateful to the City of Decatur for their collaboration throughout the grant submission process. Their support has been



instrumental in advancing our mission of regional collaboration."

This project will support the Singing River Trail's vision of a dynamic and interconnected North Alabama. The

Singing River Trail is actively working on connectivity projects with Leighton, Bridgeport, Gurley, and Huntsville, including Huntsville's \$65 million skybridge and riverwalk project along Memorial Parkway.

"This award marks a significant milestone in our efforts to connect the entire Tennessee Valley region," said John Kvach, Singing River Trail Executive Director. "This project will not only bind Decatur together but also serve as a beacon for every town and city along the Singing River Trail."

The Dr. Bill Sims Hike-Bike Way will include new shared use paths, streetscape improvements, separated bicycle lanes, mid-block crossings, sidewalks, and new streetscape elements like lighting and landscaping. The project is estimated to be complete in 2028.

For more information about the Dr. Bill Sims Hike-Bike Way on the Singing River Trail: Reconnecting Old Town to Decatur's Riverfront project, visit www.cityofdecatur.com/departments/community-development/rcn/

About Singing River Trail: Established in 2018, Singing River Trail is a 200+ mile greenway system that strengthens regional bonds and creates new health and wellness, educational, economic, tourism, and entrepreneurial opportunities for the people and communities in the Tennessee Valley region.



MARY F SPEARS, AGENT

7833-A Highway 72 West
Madison, AL 35758

Bus: 256-837-8899 Fax: 256-837-8225

mary.spears.cffc@statefarm.com



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