EBONY NEWS TODAY

VOLUME 25, ISSUE 336 | NOVEMBER 2026 Section "A" "The Heartbeat of Our Community"

Faith, Family and Sunday Door-Knocking Carry Angie Jones-Smith to Upset Win in Cocoa's District 1

A lifelong Cocoa resident who lost her job of 23 years this summer edged two rivals by 70 votes





By Ebony News Today Staff

COCOA, Fla. — Angie Jones-Smith won a three-way race for Cocoa City Council District 1 by 70 votes, an upset in the Nov. 3 general election for an underdog campaign built on Sunday door-knocking. The lifelong Cocoa resident finished ahead of Alton Edmond and Duffy Wagner, according to the latest unofficial tally from the Brevard County Supervisor of Elections.

With all three participating precincts reporting, Jones-Smith received 587 votes (37.90%). Edmond received 517 votes (33.38%) and Wagner 445 votes (28.73%). Voters cast 1,549 votes in the contest. The county's Nov. 10 update included provisional ballots and mail ballots that were eligible to be cured. Spectrum News 13 reported the same totals for each candidate.

Before Election Day, The Space Coast Rocket published an interactive projection for the District 1 race. It used county ballot data and assumptions about how voters might split among the three candidates. Jones-Smith said her campaign was run by a small team that went out every Sunday to talk with residents, in the heat and in the rain.

"This victory means far more to me than winning an election," Jones-Smith said in a statement. "It's a testament to faith, family, perseverance, and the incredible people who stood beside me."

A Campaign Through Hardship

Jones-Smith ran during a hard year for her family. She said her husband was diagnosed with prostate cancer and had surgery in April. In August, she said, budget cuts cost her the job she had held for 23 years. County records show she qualified for the ballot on Aug. 4, the first day of the municipal qualifying period.

She said her husband, parents and brothers kept her grounded. She also thanked the volunteers she calls "Angie's Angels," who knocked on doors, prayed with her and checked on her during difficult moments. She credited campaign manager Victoria Jones, and said Cocoa Mayor Michael C. Blake and attorney Kendall Moore mentored her throughout the race.







"We didn't have a big production," Jones-Smith said. "We had faith, family, a committed team, and a shared belief in what was possible."

From Front Doors to City Hall

Jones-Smith's family has deep roots in Cocoa. For her, the win means going from asking neighbors for their votes to representing them at City Hall.

"I've gone from knocking on doors asking my neighbors for their votes to preparing to walk through City Hall's doors to serve them," she said. "That is both a tremendous honor and a responsibility I take seriously."

North Brevard NAACP Celebrates Service, Calls for Civic Action at 42nd Freedom Fund Banquet

Retired Florida Supreme Court Justice James E. C. Perry urges civic participation as the branch honors community leaders and partners



for Ebony News Today

MIMS, Fla. — Business leaders, elected officials, clergy and residents gathered Oct. 31, 2026, at Indian River Preserve Golf Club for the North Brevard NAACP's 42nd Annual Freedom Fund and Awards Banquet.

The banquet program featured the theme "We the People" and the message "Our Vote, Our Voice." A spirited reception opened the evening, followed by dinner and an awards presentation recognizing community service and partnerships.

Perry urges public participation

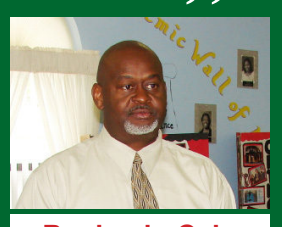
Keynote speaker James E. C. Perry, a retired Florida Supreme Court justice, traced political developments from 1972 to the present and explained how he believed they helped lay the groundwork for Project 2025. In Perry's assessment, those developments reflected a deliberate effort to shift power away from the public and toward large corporations and wealthy individuals.

Perry urged attendees to vote and stay involved in the political process so they could help shape the country's future. He also encouraged local professionals to give back by mentoring young people. Drawing on his book, Benchmarked, he described helping young peo-

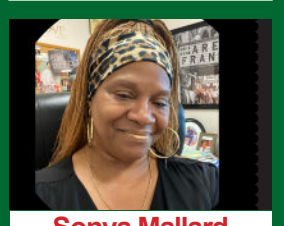
See Story on Page 2 A

Our Mission

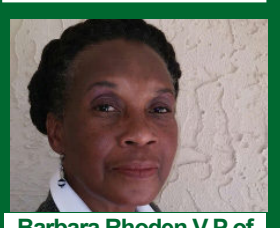
"...is to reach and serve Brevard County's African-American and Caribbean communities by: analyzing those elements affecting the quality of life for people of color; stimulating thought and participation through the sharing of information; exposing conditions and actions that detract from our quality of life and recognizing those individuals and actions within the community that deserve commendation."



Benjamin Cain
Publisher



Sonya Mallard
Website Designer
Writer



Barbara Rhoden V P of
Marketing & Advertising

Contributing Writers



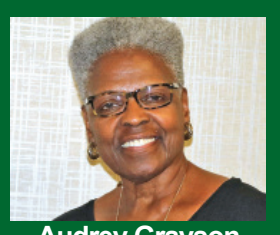
Purvette A. Chapman



Sammie Brown-Martin



Teri Jones



Audrey Grayson

ADVERTISING & EDITORIAL POLICY

To advertise in Ebony News Today, please contact us at (321) 220-4216 or email ebonynewstoday@gmail.com

.

EBONY NEWS TODAY reserves the right to edit all letters, press releases, and submitted materials for clarity, length, and style. We also reserve the right to refuse any content deemed inappropriate or not aligned with our publication standards.

All rights reserved.

Articles, opinions, and advertisements published in Ebony News Today do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Publisher.

North Brevard NAACP Celebrates Service, Calls for Civic Action at 42nd Freedom Fund Banquet

Retired Florida Supreme Court Justice James E. C. Perry urges civic participation as the branch honors community leaders and partners

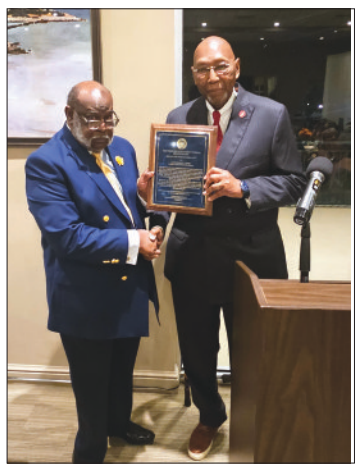
Continued from page 1A













and Concerned Citizens of Titusville attended the banquet.

Bishop Merton Clark of Truth Revealed International Ministries served as master of ceremonies, and Minister Charlie Bell of Bridge the Gap Ministries gave the invocation and blessed the meal. The audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance, and Ty Christ Beasley spoke about the occasion.

Titusville Vice Mayor Herman Cole offered greetings, along with Veronica Jenkins, first vice president of the Central Brevard NAACP; James Minus, first vice president of the South Brevard NAACP; and Dr. Jamie Bethune, second vice president of the North Brevard NAACP. Ron and Karen Griffin and Dennis Oglesby of the Reflections Band provided music.

Honoring service and community partnerships

The branch presented Perry with its Award of Appreciation. Parrish Healthcare received the Corporate Citizen of the Year Award, and Chief T. J. Wright and the Titusville Police Department received the Community Partnership Award.

The branch's President's Awards went to Kaila Skanes, branch secretary, and Mack Simon, who chairs the branch's Environmental Justice and Criminal Justice committees.

Bartley calls for action as Gary reflects on decades of service

Banquet Chair Gloria W. Bartley thanked the planning committee, attendees, sponsors and advertisers for their support. Returning to the evening's theme, she reminded guests that "We the People" can bring about change.

"This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive actions," Bartley said.

North Brevard NAACP President William E. "Bill" Gary echoed Bartley's remarks. He thanked Parrish Healthcare for its continued support of community events and for its commitment to serving North Brevard residents regardless of their ability to pay.

As he approached the end of his final term, Gary thanked those who had encouraged and supported him during more than 35 years as branch president. He









expressed pride in having his wife, son and granddaughters in the audience. A founding member of the North Brevard branch in 1979, Gary remembered the people he had worked alongside over the decades, including many who had since died.

Gary also recalled lessons he learned from NAACP leaders Charles Cherry and T. H. Poole Sr., both former Florida State Conference presidents. He also recognized Leon Russell, who held state conference leadership roles before chairing the NAACP National Board of Directors, and Earl Shinhoslter, who served as director of NAACP Region V. Gary credited Dr. Adora Obi Nweze, who led both the Miami-Dade branch and the Florida State Conference, among the leaders he learned from.

Former Cocoa Parsonage to Become a House of Hope



By Audrey Grayson

The R.E.A.L. Church of Cocoa, Florida, under the leadership of founder and senior pastor Jarvis Wash, has purchased the former parsonage of Greater St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church. The property, once home to Dr. W. O. Wells, Sr., will become the fifth residence in The R.E.A.L. Church's Permanent Supportive Housing Program.

The church plans to use the residence as a faith-based, drug-free home for men returning from incarceration and others rebuilding their lives. The purchase connects the property's history of service with a new purpose: providing supportive housing for people making a fresh start.

Named the House of Hope in Dr. Wells's honor, the residence will carry forward its connection to faith, leadership, and community engagement. The former parsonage served as a gathering place during Brevard County's civil rights movement. Its planned use as supportive housing gives that history a continuing role in the Cocoa community.

Through this purchase, The R.E.A.L. Church brings together the preservation of a historic home and the expansion of its housing ministry. The House of Hope will link the parsonage's past with its next chapter, offering a place for residents to rebuild their lives while honoring Dr. Wells's legacy of faith and community service.

A dedication ceremony was held at the Greater St Paul Missionary Baptist Church in Cocoa on Sunday September 13, 2026, to commemorate this notable event. Several local pastors, friends and family members including Dr. Wells's son, Pastor Oliver Wells participated in this memorable program.

This blessed event was the brainchild of Dr. Barbara C. Moore a long-time member of Greater St Paul Missionary Baptist Church and supporter of the community.

Honoring Dr. Wells's legacy of faith and the parsonage's history of service, The R.E.A.L. Church will welcome men rebuilding their lives into the House of Hope with the love of Christ and the care of a church family. Through this ministry, the church will offer stability, encouragement, and renewed hope, carrying that legacy forward in a spirit of fellowship and reminding each resident that, by God's grace, a new beginning is possible.











COLLEGE FOOTBALL / FLORIDA CLASSIC

2026 Florida Classic Weekend Brings FAMU and Bethune-Cookman Back to Orlando

The Rattlers and Wildcats meet Saturday, Nov. 21, capping three days of football, marching bands and alumni gatherings.

By Ebony News Today Staff



Bethune-Cookman quarterback Timmy McClain prepares to throw against Florida A&M at the 2025 Florida Classic.

2026 FLORIDA CLASSIC WEEKEND

THURSDAY, NOV. 19 / 8 A.M.
Golf Tournament presented by Wells Fargo · Eagle Creek Golf Club
FRIDAY, NOV. 20 / 11:30 A.M.
Kickoff Luncheon presented by Florida Blue · Rosen Centre Hotel
FRIDAY, NOV. 20 / 7 P.M.
Battle of the Bands presented by Publix · Kia Center
SATURDAY, NOV. 21 / 11:30 A.M.
Fan Fest · Tinker Field
SATURDAY, NOV. 21 / 3:30 P.M.
Florida A&M vs. Bethune-Cookman · Camping World Stadium

All times Eastern. Tickets and parking at floridaclassic.org.

ORLANDO, Fla. — The first showdown of Florida Classic Weekend will happen Friday night at Kia Center, where Florida A&M University's Marching 100 and Bethune-Cookman University's Marching Wildcats will share the floor with 11 high school bands. The next afternoon, the Rattlers and Wildcats will renew their football rivalry at Camping World Stadium, with kickoff set for 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 21.

Bethune-Cookman comes back to Orlando with bragging rights after a 38–34 win in the 2025 Classic. That game changed hands four times in the fourth quarter. Facing fourth down in the closing seconds, Wildcats quarterback Timmy McClain found Josh Evans for a 41-yard touchdown that gave Bethune-Cookman its first Classic victory since 2019.

A rivalry more than a century in the making

The schools first met in Tallahassee in 1925, when Florida A&M won 25–0. The modern Florida Classic began in Tampa in 1978 with a comeback. Bethune-Cookman built a 17–0 lead before Florida A&M scored 27 unanswered points. The Classic moved to Orlando in 1997, and organizers say it has drawn more than 2 million spectators since its 1978 debut.

The two historically Black universities own the event, and proceeds from ticket sales and corporate support directly benefit the schools.
Friday's kickoff luncheon brings both campus communities together at the Rosen Centre Hotel, where university presidents and student leaders will speak and both head coaches will preview Saturday's game.

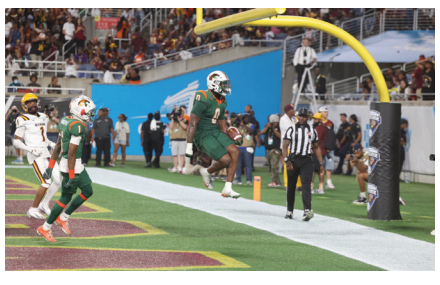
Two chances to see the bands

Friday's Florida Blue Battle of the Bands presented by Publix starts at 7 p.m. at Kia Center. High school musicians from across the Southeast will perform alongside the Marching 100 and the Marching Wildcats.
Both university bands return Saturday for the Disney halftime show at Camping World Stadium, which is included with game admission.

Saturday's Fan Fest opens at 11:30 a.m. at Tinker Field, on the west side of the stadium. Families can enjoy games, inflatables and face painting, with food and drinks available for purchase from local vendors. Admission is free and open to fans with or without a game ticket.

Camping World Stadium will operate at an adjusted capacity during ongoing renovations. Fans can find game tickets, parking and event details on the official Florida Classic website.

FROM THE 2025 FLORIDA CLASSIC



FAMU near the end zone



Marching 100 drumline



Bethune-Cookman performers



McClain runs with the ball



Wildcats celebrate their win





COMMUNITY NEWS





Sisterhood Shines at Tulips Blooms Glitz Glam and Disco Jam

SHE Empowers celebrates friendship and encouragement at the seventh annual gathering













By Ebony News Today Staff

Colorful fashion and shared smiles set the scene at Tulips Blooms' seventh annual Glitz, Glam & Disco Jam, a gathering that SHE Empowers, Inc. celebrated as a day of sisterhood, laughter and lasting memories.

In a public recap, SHE Empowers described women coming together to celebrate, encourage one another and enjoy time in one another's company. Music, glamorous outfits and joyful fellowship helped shape the occasion, according to the organization's account.

The photographs supplied with the recap capture that spirit through individual portraits, pairs of friends and small groups posing against a festive backdrop. Bright pink, green and yellow balloons frame the event signage, while guests' colorful suits, dresses and coordinated accessories add their own sense of occasion.

The images offer a simple record of connection: people standing close, smiling for the camera and making time for shared photographs. They complement the organization's emphasis on friendship and the pleasure of gathering together.

"There's something special about women coming together to celebrate, encourage one another, and simply enjoy the moment," SHE Empowers wrote.

That message placed encouragement at the heart of the celebration. Alongside the fashion and music, the recap highlighted the relationships that can make a gathering memorable—the chance to reconnect, share laughter and recognize one another.

SHE Empowers also included breast cancer awareness among the themes accompanying its post. The supplied materials did not identify individual guests as survivors or describe specific health activities, so those details are not attributed to anyone pictured.

The seventh annual event's title promised glitz, glam and a disco jam. The organization's account emphasized the fellowship that accompanied those elements, describing an atmosphere filled with positive energy and meaningful connections.

For Ebony News Today readers, the photographs and recap offer a cheerful community portrait of women celebrating together. SHE Empowers closed its message by celebrating sisterhood, friendship and memories to carry beyond the day itself.

Parramore Market Opens With Fresh Food and Community at Its Heart

A new Orlando neighborhood resource pairs grocery access with dignity and community support



Participants gather for the ribbon cutting outside Parramore Market





Grocery shelves are stocked inside the new community market

By Ebony News Today Staff

ORLANDO, Fla. — A ribbon cutting, stocked shelves and neighbors gathering to celebrate marked a new chapter for Parramore: a community market designed to make everyday resources more accessible.

Parramore Market, developed by The Desire Foundation, is located at 536 N. Westmoreland Drive, Suite 105. The foundation describes it as a micro grocery store and community resource hub shaped by residents' input, with a mission that connects food access, health-focused initiatives and practical support.

Photographs supplied from the celebration show fresh produce, grocery shelves and guests touring the space. Outside, participants gathered along a red carpet for the ribbon cutting. Inside, signs carried messages about meals, dignity and the people the market intends to serve.

Tiffany Moore Russell celebrated the opening in a public social media post, pointing to cooperation among residents and the public and private sectors.

"This is what happens when the public and private sectors come together with the community at the table," Russell wrote.

Her message described the market as a source of fresh resources and local opportunity, and emphasized the importance of neighborhood investment.



Fresh vegetables and other produce are displayed for shoppers

For families, a nearby market can mean a more convenient place to find groceries and connect with support. The foundation's stated approach puts residents' needs and reliable access at the center of the project.

The opening celebration offered a welcoming introduction to that work. The supplied photographs show people exchanging greetings, listening to speakers and posing together around a space now stocked for its community purpose.

Residents interested in using the market can visit thedesirefoundationinc.org to register for a Parramore Market card and check current information. The foundation lists info@thedesirefoundationinc.org as its contact email.

The next chapter will unfold through the people who shop, volunteer and build connections there. For now, Parramore has a new community resource—and a gathering place where an investment in the neighborhood has become visible.

RIVERVIEW
MEMORIAL GARDENS
FAMILY & VETERAN OWNED
Your family matters
To ours.



Every life holds a story. Every family matters.
Our family is here to help you honor those
you love with personal care and compassion.
Let's talk. We're here for your family.
Burial | Green burial | Cremation burial | Memorials
321-632-9050
riverviewmemorialcemetery.net
3751 N. Cocoa Blvd. | Cocoa, FL 32926

Brevard Deltas Raise More Than $5,500 at Breast Cancer Walk Honoring Survivors and Loved Ones











By Ebony News Today Staff

BREVARD COUNTY, Fla. — The Brevard County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. raised more than $5,500 at the 2026 Brevard County Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk, earning recognition as one of the event's top fundraising teams, according to the chapter.

The Deltas of Brevard walked to celebrate survivors, honor loved ones who had died and stand with people affected by breast cancer. In reflections shared after the walk, participants told stories of the people they carried in their hearts and the people who had carried them through treatment.

For Tamikka Dawkins, crossing the finish line was a way to honor her mother. "Although I wish you were here to share this moment with us, I know your love will always walk beside us," Dawkins wrote.

Kathy Hamilton-Brown, who shared her reflection alongside Mara Neal, spoke of what it meant to gather in support of survivors and in memory of loved ones. "Every step represents hope, strength, and the power of community," she wrote.

For Westanna Harvey Bobbitt, the walk was also a chance to thank the people who had stood by her since she was diagnosed with stage 1 breast cancer in November 2020. She credited her daughter, Jasmine Bobbitt, her niece, Cynthia L. Smith, her husband, Jimmy Bobbitt, and the friends and loved ones she calls her "Prayer Warriors" for showing up throughout her treatment and recovery.

Bobbitt said her faith sustained her as she underwent chemotherapy, surgery and radiation under the care of her Health First cancer team. She shared that she was cancer-free as of June 2026. The day after the walk, she was still thinking about the people who had helped her get there.

"I am a Thriver, Warrior and Survivor," Bobbitt wrote.

ATTENTION SENIORS
(55 Years and Older)
DEFENSIVE DRIVING CLASS
PALM BAY SENIOR CENTER

Saturday, November 21, 2026
Saturday, January 30, 2027

SAME SCHEDULE BOTH DATES
10:00 AM–Noon | Class
Noon–12:30 PM | Lunch on your own
12:30–2:30 PM | Class

$25 PER PERSON Cash or check



Refresh safe driving skills
Get traffic law updates and crash prevention tips.
Eligible drivers may qualify for a three-year auto insurance discount.
Florida Statute 627.0652

SIGN UP AT THE FRONT DESK
Pay when you sign up. Limit 25.
Make checks payable to Brevard Traffic School.

Sponsored by Brevard Traffic School
A Florida state-certified school
(321) 951-0088
sdphillips7491@gmail.com





SPIRIT AND CHURCH

Pastor R. Shaun Ferguson Reflects on 25 Years at Faith Temple Christian Center

The Rockledge pastor shares what ministry has taught him about leading through loss, serving his neighbors and preparing the next generation







Article and photos by Audrey Grayson

ROCKLEDGE, Fla. — Church members, family, friends and community leaders gathered to celebrate Pastor R. Shaun Ferguson's 25th pastoral anniversary at Faith Temple Christian Center. They gave thanks for the sermons he preached, the prayers he offered and the quiet acts of service that carried the church's ministry beyond Sunday worship.

In this Q&A, Ferguson reflects on the people who shaped his calling, the losses that tested his faith and the work he hopes Faith Temple will carry forward.

The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Calling and Ministry

1. What has been one of the hardest lessons you've learned in ministry?

One of the hardest lessons I've learned is that I cannot carry everyone. Early in ministry, I felt responsible for every person's spiritual growth, every conflict and every outcome. Over time, I learned to trust God to do what only He can do. My calling is to preach the Word, love people and lead with integrity. Only God can change hearts.

I've also learned that leadership can be lonely. A pastor carries burdens few people see or understand. Those difficult seasons drew me closer to God and made me a more patient, compassionate shepherd. They taught me to depend on His grace and to measure the work by the lives Jesus Christ transforms.

2. Who helped shape your ministry?

My father, Bishop Clarence Ferguson, was my greatest mentor. I watched him preach the Gospel and live it every day. He taught me to love people, serve faithfully and remain steadfast through difficult circumstances.

My mother, Dr. Susie Ferguson, modeled faith, discipline, compassion and excellence. She taught me the value of education and preparation and showed me how to treat people with dignity. Her prayers have sustained me more times than she probably realizes.

My late wife, Pastor Te-Kisha Ferguson, was my partner in ministry. She believed in me, encouraged me through difficult seasons and reminded me to stay focused on God's assignment. What we learned together still shapes how I lead and care for people. I'm also grateful to the elders, deacons, ministers, church members and spiritual fathers who prayed for me, corrected me and walked alongside me.

Scripture and Perseverance

3. What Scripture has anchored you throughout your ministry?

"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain… yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

1 Corinthians 15:10 (KJV)

That verse reminds me how much I depend on God's grace. There have been times when I felt inadequate, exhausted or uncertain, and His grace sustained me. It gave me the strength to keep serving when the assignment was difficult.

4. What has ministry taught you about persevering through disappointment, loss or criticism?

Perseverance means remaining faithful in the middle of pain. Losing my wife while continuing to pastor was one of the greatest challenges of my life. Losing my father, who was my mentor and hero, was another. Through both losses, God proved Himself faithful.

I've learned to keep my identity rooted in God's calling when people praise me or criticize me. Remembering that Jesus Himself was misunderstood helps me keep my eyes on Christ and trust God for the strength to carry out the work He gave me.

Advice and Legacy

5. What advice would you give a young minister just beginning to answer their calling?

First, fall in love with God before you fall in love with ministry. Develop your private prayer life before you seek a public platform. Stay teachable, honor your spiritual leaders and remain accountable.

Be willing to visit people in the hospital, comfort grieving families, mentor young people and show up when someone needs you. Measure your ministry by how faithfully you carry out God's assignment.

6. What do you hope people remember most about your ministry?

I hope they remember that I loved God, loved His people and served with integrity. I want them to remember a church where families found support, young people had mentors and people found hope again. If they remember that I faithfully preached God's Word, cared for the community, developed leaders and pointed people toward Jesus, I'll consider my ministry successful.

Community Impact and the Future

7. How has Faith Temple served the community over the past 25 years?

We've fed families, supported schools, prayed with first responders, mentored young people and cared for seniors. Each year, we've provided Thanksgiving meals for families in need. Through our Angel Tree program and community partnerships, we've helped provide Christmas gifts for children.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we opened our doors as a community vaccination hub and continued to hold funeral services for grieving families. I've also had the opportunity to serve the city through public service, which has helped strengthen the church's ties to the wider community. I want our neighbors to know they can count on Faith Temple when they need help.

8. What lasting impact do you hope Faith Temple will make?

My prayer is that Faith Temple will continue to be known as a church that builds people of faith through love. I want future generations to inherit a church grounded in Scripture and responsive to the needs of its neighbors. That means developing leaders, strengthening families, mentoring young people, serving our city and sharing the Gospel with compassion.

I hope faith, integrity, love, service, generosity and excellence continue to guide this church long after I'm gone. If someone walks through these doors 50 years from now and experiences the love of Jesus because of seeds we planted today, our ministry will have been worth it.

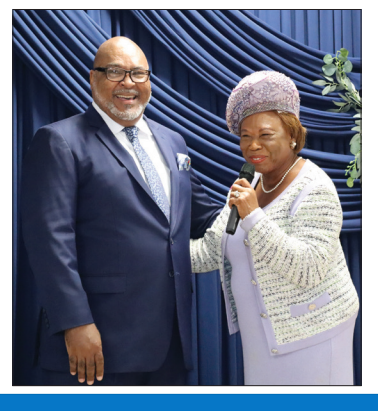














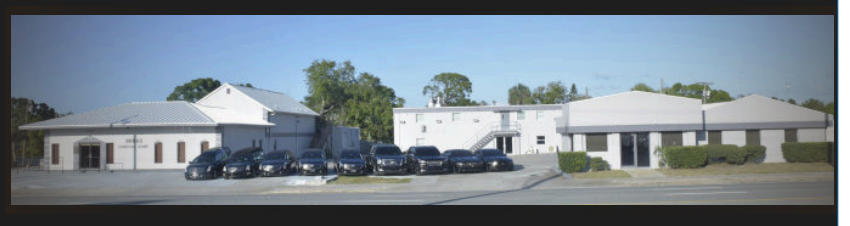


Bruce Buggs
Licensed Funeral Director, Embalmer
Alisha Buggs
Licensed Funeral Director, Embalmer
Alia Buggs-Hamilton
Licensed Funeral Director, Embalmer
Brucia Buggs
Licensed Funeral Director, Embalmer

BUGGS
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY

2701 S. Harbor City Boulevard
Melbourne, Florida 32901
(321) 728-7076

- CREMATIONS (CREMATORY ON SITE)
- TRADITIONAL & CUSTOMIZED FUNERALS
- PRE-ARRANGEMENTS (STATE LICENSED)
- INTERNATIONAL & DOMESTIC SHIPPING
- CHAPEL (200 SEATING CAPACITY)
- CEMETERY OWNERSHIP
- FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED







EMAIL: Buggs_B@Bellsouth.net
WEBSITE: www.BuggsFuneralHome.com

Greater St James Honors Pastor Keith Buckner Sr and Family for 29 Years of Service

Mims congregation celebrates faithful leadership with worship, fellowship and a guest message from Rev. Jerry Alexander











By Ebony News Today Staff

MIMS — Greater St. James Missionary Baptist Church honored Pastor Keith Buckner, Sr. and his family during his 29th Pastoral Appreciation, bringing the church family and visiting friends together in gratitude for his leadership and service.

In its celebration announcement, the church recognized Buckner's dedication to preaching God's Word and shepherding the congregation. The tribute emphasized the faith and commitment that have sustained his ministry through the years.

Rev. Jerry Alexander, pastor of Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, served as guest minister and delivered the message for the occasion, according to the church. His participation joined the congregation's expressions of appreciation for Buckner and his family.

Photographs supplied with the announcement show moments of worship inside the sanctuary, participants gathered near the lectern, embraces and posed fellowship photographs. Together, the images offer a view of a church family marking a meaningful milestone across generations.

Greater St. James thanked its members, visiting friends and everyone who helped make the celebration memorable. The congregation acknowledged the love, prayers and support shared with the pastor and his family.

The announcement also cited Jeremiah 3:15, a passage describing pastors who feed God's people with knowledge and understanding. That scriptural theme reflected the congregation's focus on pastoral care and faithful leadership.

For Greater St. James, the 29th Pastoral Appreciation offered an opportunity to recognize years of ministry while expressing continued support for Pastor Buckner and his family.

Melbourne–Palm Bay Deltas Celebrate Sisterhood With Paint and Reconnection

The chapter's "Brushes, Bags & Bond" gathering marked November Reclamation Month with hand-painted wine glasses and time to renew friendships

By Ebony News Today Staff

BREVARD COUNTY, Fla. — Members of the Melbourne-Palm Bay Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. spent an afternoon painting Delta-inspired wine glasses, sharing laughs and reconnecting during the chapter's November Reclamation Month celebration.





The gathering, titled "Brushes, Bags & Bond: The Crimson & Cream Canvas Experience," took place at The Mermaid House Cafe & Wine Bar. The Glitz & Glam of Art guided members as they decorated their own glasses.

In its recap, the chapter said Reclamation Month is an opportunity to welcome sorority sisters back into active chapter life and strengthen relationships among members. Painting together gave members time to catch up and make new memories.

The chapter thanked its host and art facilitator and closed its recap with a call to fellow members: "Reclaim a Soror. Reconnect. Reignite the Bond."

Source: Melbourne-Palm Bay Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Truth Revealed Int'l Ministries
in partnership with AIM (Activate Inspired Men)

MEN'S ADVANCE RELOADED 2027

LEADERSHIP MATTERS

JANUARY 8–9, 2027



FRIDAY, JANUARY 8
Opening Night • 7 p.m.
Truth Revealed Int'l Ministries
2838 Palm Bay Road NE
Palm Bay, FL 32905

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9
Tournament Doors Open • 8 a.m.
Aaron's Court Basketball Tournament
Video Game Tournament •
Madden NFL 27 & NBA 2K27
Joseph N. Davis Community Center
2547 Bruce D. Buggs St.
Melbourne, FL 32901

GENERAL ADMISSION $25

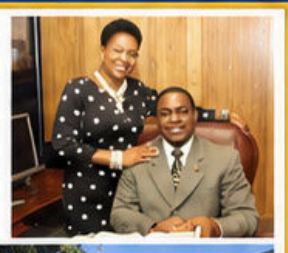
Official Shirts • Short Sleeve $15 • Long Sleeve $20
Register & Order Shirts at truthrevealed.org
Questions? aim@truthrevealed.org

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Your Guide to Local Houses of Worship

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." — Psalm 122:1 (KJV)

ZION ORTHODOX PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH
715 South Fiske Boulevard
Cocoa, FL 32922
Phone: 321-632-6120
www.zionorthodoxpbchurch.org





Worship Service.....8am
Church School.....9:30 am
Worship Service.....11am
Bible Study • Monday.....6pm
Prayer Meeting • Tuesday.....7pm

"Enter to Worship ~ Exit to Serve"

Greater Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church
2416 S. Lipscomb St.
Melbourne, FL 32901
321-724-1557



Rev. Cheryl P. Wilcox Pastor

Sunday Worship.....10 am
Monday Youth Bible Study..... 6 pm
(Transportation is provided)
Tuesday Bible Study.....7 pm
• Holy Communion Every First Sunday
• 4th Sunday is Youth Sunday & Dress Down Sunday

TRUTH REVEALED INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES
2838 Palm Bay Rd.,
Palm Bay 32905
321-952-5151
www.truthrevealed.org



Bishop Merton L. Clark, Pastor

Sunday Worship.....8 am & 11:00am
Wednesday Bible Study.....7:00pm
Friday Corporate Prayer.....7:00pm

"Unveiling Truth to the Nations"

"Walk by faith, not by sight." — 2 Corinthians 5:7

MT. MORIAH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
2295 Dr. Harvey Riley St. NE
Palm Bay, FL 32905
Ph. (321) 725-1791 Fax (321) 872-0041
Email: mtmoriah@mmmbc.org
Website: www.mtmoriahmbcpb.org
****
*Sunday School, Sunday Mornings..... 8:45 AM
*Sunday Morning Worship Service ..... 10:00 AM
(Live Streamed: FaceBook and YouTube)
*Tuesday Night Prayer Meeting & Bible Study ..... 6:00 PM
(Live Streamed: FaceBook and YouTube)
*Noon Day Prayer ..... 12:00 PM (Noon)
*Wednesday Evenings "Youth Enrichment" 5:30-7:00
"It Is Our Desire For Every Soul To Catch On Fire"



Dr. Quintin P. Woods, Sr.
Pastor/Visionary Undershepherd

MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH
2729 Lipscomb St.,
Melbourne 32901
321-729-6597

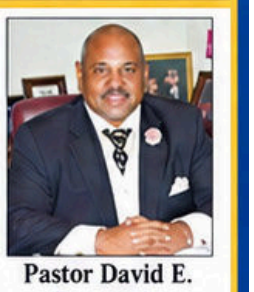


Pastor Nathanial Harris

Sunday .....8am & 10:45 am
Tuesday Youth Bible Study.....6pm
Tuesday Leadership.....7pm
Tuesday Adult Bible Study.....7pm
Wednesday Prayer.....12 noon

We walk by faith and not by sight

GREATER ST. PAUL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
213 Stone Street,
Cocoa, Florida 32922
Church: 321-636-7178
Email: greaterstpaulmbc@yahoo.com
www.greaterstaintpaulmbc.org
Facebook: Greater St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church



Pastor David E. Bryant, Sr.

Sunday Worship ..... 9:30 a.m
Sunday School 8:30am
Prayer & Bible Study: Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

"The Best Is Yet To Come"

"Let all things be done decently and in order." — 1 Corinthians 14:40

ST. JAMES A.M.E. CHURCH
625 Dunmitt Avenue
Titusville, FL 32796
(321) 269-3645 - Office
stjames0@cfl.rr.com- Email



Rev. Dr. Michael K. Bouie & Rev. Dr. Tamira V. Bouie

Worship Services:
Sundays at 8:00am and 11:00am
(Sunday) School: Sundays at 9:45am
Bible Study: Wednesdays at 12:00pm and Thursdays at 7:00pm

"Building God's Kingdom One Soul at a Time"

GREATER MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH
1390 North Tropical Trail
Merritt Island, Fl
321-452-0089

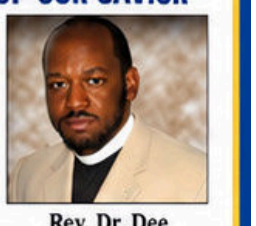


Roderick A. Harris, Pastor

Sunday School.....9:30am
Morning Worship Service....11:15 am
Evening Worship Service.....4:00 pm
(Holy Communion Every Sunday)
Prayer Meeting and Bible Study.....Wednesday.... 6:30pm
Mid Day Prayer.....Wednesday.....12noon

"We don't change the WORD but the WORD changes us"

THE EPISCOPAL/ANGLICAN CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOR
1000 Jersey Lane
Palm Bay, FL 32905
Phone: 321-732-8032
Email: coospalmbay@gmail.com
(mailto:coospalmbay@gmail.com)
www.churchofoursaviorpalmbay.org



Rev. Dr. Dee Wellington Bright Pastor and Rector

Worship Services:
- Sundays: 9:30am
- Sunday School: 9:30am
- Zoom Midweek Service & Bible Study: 10 & 11am*

"We are a community of believers with a heart for the World"

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..." — John 3:16 (KJV)

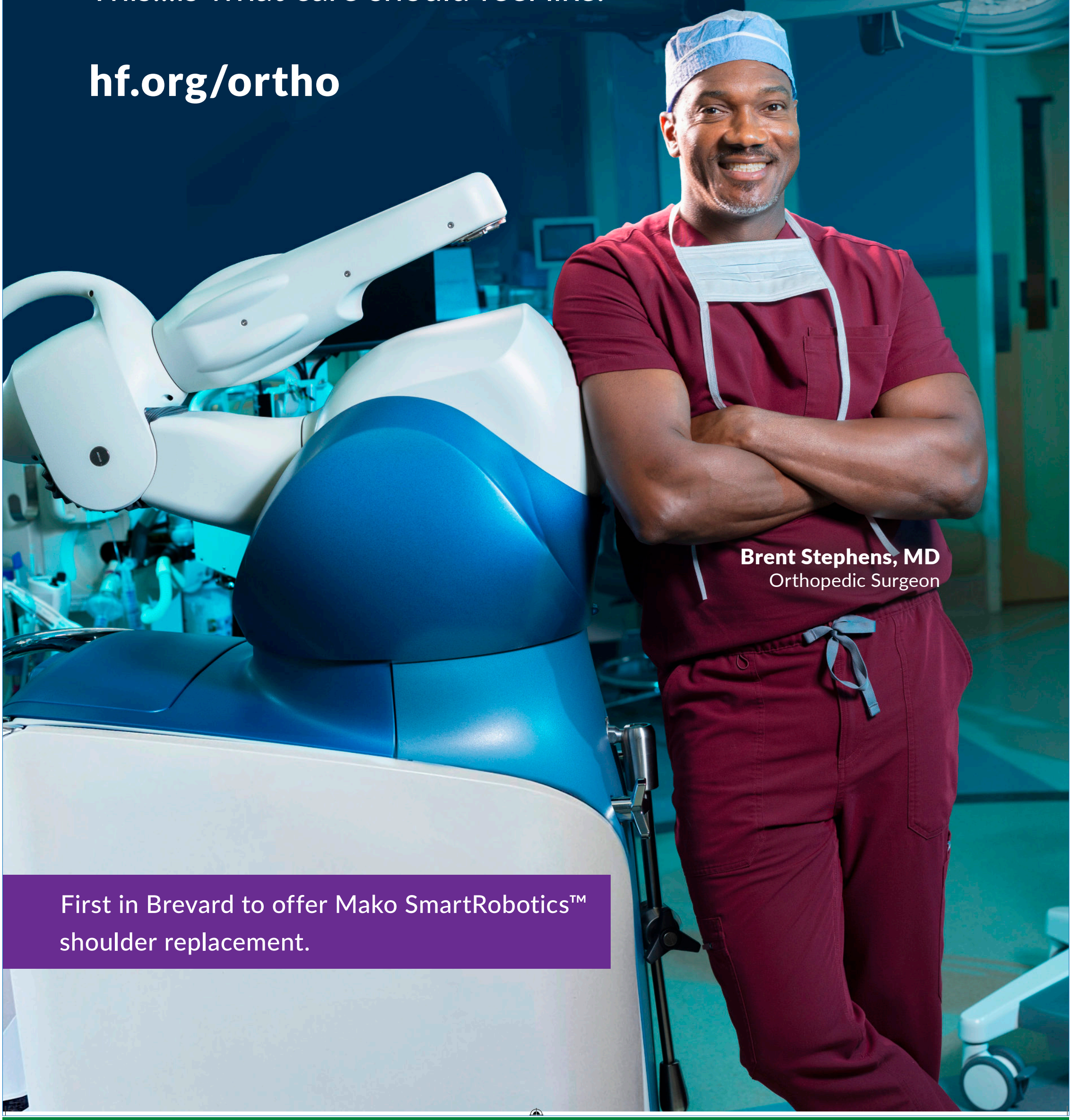
HealthFirst

Expert orthopedic care. Here at home.

With advanced surgical techniques and personalized care, our orthopedic team helps you get back to feeling like yourself again.

This...is what care should feel like.

hf.org/ortho



First in Brevard to offer Mako SmartRobotics™ shoulder replacement.

EBONY NEWS TODAY

VOLUME 25, ISSUE 336| NOVEMBER 2026 | Section "B" | "The Heartbeat of Our Community"

ELECTION 2026 RECAP

A Historic Night: Black Americans Break Barriers From Statehouses to the Senate

Five Black governors will serve at the same time for the first time in U.S. history, Mississippi sent a Black senator to Washington for the first time since Reconstruction, and Black women swept into offices no one like them had held before.

BY EBONY NEWS TODAY STAFF

For most of American history, the governor's mansion was a door Black Americans could see but rarely open. Before Election Day 2026, only three Black Americans had ever been elected governor of a U.S. state. On November 3, voters in four more states changed that in a single night.

Former Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms became the first Black woman ever elected governor of any state. Florida Rep. Byron Donalds became the first Black Republican elected governor anywhere in the country. David Crowley in Wisconsin and Aaron Ford in Nevada became the first Black governors in their states' histories, and Maryland's Wes Moore won a second term. When they take office, five Black governors will serve at the same time for the first time ever, and a sixth Black leader, Stacey Plaskett, is set to govern the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The breakthroughs crossed party lines and reached every level of the ballot: the U.S. Senate, the House, and statewide offices from Georgia to Kansas to South Carolina. Some results still await certification, and an early Joint Center tally suggested Black representation in the House may shrink slightly once every race is settled. But the story of this midterm is one of firsts.

In Georgia, seven more Black women won statewide or utility-commission seats alongside Bottoms. And a new class of Black lawmakers heads to the House, among them a Floridian: Oliver Gilbert III, who succeeds Rep. Frederica Wilson.

"Mississippi has its first Black U.S. senator since Reconstruction, and the first ever chosen directly by the state's voters."

WHAT COMES NEXT

The work begins in January. New governors will write budgets that reach into every household, from Medicaid in Georgia to property taxes and home insurance here in Florida. New members of Congress will vote on wages, health care and the federal dollars that rebuild communities. And for the first time, Black women will hold a governor's office and serve three at a time in the U.S. Senate.

For the families who marched, organized and voted for generations so that nights like November 3 could happen, the results are more than numbers. They are proof of what the vote can do. Ebony News Today will keep following these leaders, and holding them accountable, as they take office.

WHERE CONGRESS STANDS

As of 12:06 a.m. ET on Nov. 16, the Associated Press count showed Democrats had won 256 House seats and Republicans 169, with 10 seats not yet counted as won for either party; AP's results don't say which way those will go. In the Senate, as of 12:05 a.m. ET, AP showed Democrats with 55 seats in total and Republicans with 44, with one seat not yet counted as won or held over for either party. These numbers may have changed since.



Illustration: Black winners from governors' mansions to the halls of Congress, part of a historic 2026 midterm election.

BY THE NUMBERS

5
Black governors serving at once, a first in U.S. history

1ST
Black woman elected governor of any state: Keisha Lance Bottoms

1ST
Black Republican elected governor: Byron Donalds of Florida

7
Black senators the incoming Senate is on track to seat, a record

8
Georgia statewide winners who are Black women, including the governor

THE GOVERNORS

Wins in the South, the Midwest and the West



Keisha Lance Bottoms
GEORGIA · DEMOCRAT

The former Atlanta mayor defeated Republican Rick Jackson to become the first Black woman elected governor of any U.S. state, and Georgia's first Black governor. She has made Medicaid expansion a top priority.



Byron Donalds
FLORIDA · REPUBLICAN

The congressman defeated Democrat David Jolly to become Florida's first Black governor and the first Black Republican elected governor in the U.S. His first budget and property-tax approach will shape how Brevard County funds services.



David Crowley
WISCONSIN · DEMOCRAT

The Milwaukee County executive becomes Wisconsin's first Black governor in the state's 178-year history. He has proposed expanding BadgerCare and boosting child care and housing support.



Aaron Ford
NEVADA · DEMOCRAT

Nevada's attorney general unseated Republican Gov. Joe Lombardo, becoming the state's first Black governor and the first Black governor of a state west of the Mississippi River.



Wes Moore
MARYLAND · DEMOCRAT

Maryland's first Black governor won a second term, giving him four more years for the workforce and economic mobility programs he championed.



Stacey Plaskett
U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS · DEMOCRAT

The territory's outgoing delegate to Congress is set to become its first woman governor, bringing Washington experience to the fight for disaster-recovery dollars.

THE U.S. SENATE

A record seven Black senators on track to serve



Scott Colom
MISSISSIPPI · DEMOCRAT

Defeated Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith after a long count to become Mississippi's first Black U.S. senator since Hiram Revels in 1870. In 2022, Hyde-Smith had blocked his nomination to the federal bench.



Juliana Stratton
ILLINOIS · DEMOCRAT

The lieutenant governor won Sen. Dick Durbin's open seat. With Angela Alsobrooks and Lisa Blunt Rochester, three Black women will serve in the Senate together for the first time.

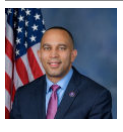


Cory Booker
NEW JERSEY · DEMOCRAT

Won another term, keeping a leading voice on criminal justice and food policy in the Senate.

U.S. HOUSE

New members & reelected



Hakeem Jeffries
N.Y. 8TH · D

Reelected; would be first Black speaker if elected in January.



Oliver Gilbert III
FLA. 24TH · D

Ex-Miami Gardens mayor succeeds Rep. Frederica Wilson.



Melat Kiros
COLO. 1ST · D

Colorado's first Black congresswoman.



Adrian Boafo
MD. 5TH · D

Succeeds longtime Rep. Steny Hoyer.



Darializa Avila Chevalier
N.Y. 13TH · D

Afro-Latina labor organizer.



LaKesha Womack
N.C. 14TH · D

Wins seat once held by Republican Tim Moore.



Cyril Jefferson
N.C. 6TH · D

High Point mayor focused on public education.



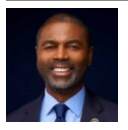
Donavan McKinney
MICH. 13TH · D

Detroit-area state lawmaker.



Jasmine Clark
GA. 13TH · D

Wins the late David Scott's seat.



La Shawn Ford
ILL. 7TH · D

Succeeds Rep. Danny Davis.



Donna Miller
ILL. 2ND · D

Succeeds Rep. Robin Kelly.



Chris Rabb
PA. 3RD · D

Succeeds Rep. Dwight Evans.



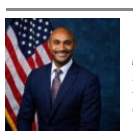
Colin Allred
TEXAS 33RD · D

Returns in Rep. Marc Veasey's seat.



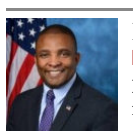
Frederick Haynes III
TEXAS 30TH · D

Pastor succeeds Rep. Jasmine Crockett.



Shomari Figures
ALA. 2ND · D

Reelected in a redrawn district.



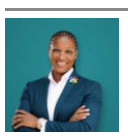
Don Davis
N.C. 1ST · D

Reelected under a new map.



Robert White
D.C. DELEGATE · D

Succeeds Eleanor Holmes Norton.

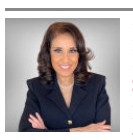


Janelle Sarauw
U.S.V.I. DELEGATE · D

Succeeds Stacey Plaskett.

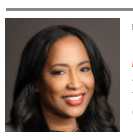
GEORGIA'S SWEEP

Black women win statewide



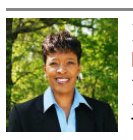
Penny Brown Reynolds
SECRETARY OF STATE · D

First Black woman in the office.



Tanya Miller
ATTORNEY GENERAL · D

First Black woman elected Georgia AG.



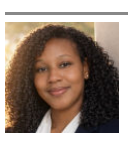
Keisha Sean Waites
INSURANCE COMM. · D

Unseated incumbent John King.



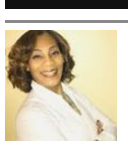
Nikki Porcher
LABOR COMM. · D

Founder of Buy From a Black Woman.



Katherine Juhan-Arnold
AGRICULTURE COMM. · D

Oversees farms, food safety.



Lydia Powell
SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT · D

Georgia's top elected education post.

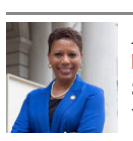


Shelia Edwards
PUBLIC SERVICE COMM. · D

Will help set power and utility rates.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS

Historic wins, both parties



Adrienne Adams
NEW YORK · D

State's first Black woman Lt. Gov.



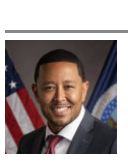
Mike Reichenbach
SOUTH CAROLINA · R

First Black Lt. Gov. since Reconstruction.



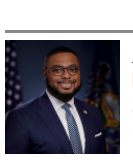
KC Ohaebosim
KANSAS · D

First Black statewide official since 1880s.



T.W. Shannon
OKLAHOMA · R

Ex-House speaker; Chickasaw citizen.



Austin Davis
PENNSYLVANIA · D

State's first Black Lt. Gov.; 2nd term.

Milton Potter
U.S.V.I. · D

Ran on Plaskett's ticket.

STATEWIDE

Attorneys general & more

Kwame Raoul
ILLINOIS AG · D

Won a third term.

Anthony Brown
MARYLAND AG · D

State's first Black AG; 2nd term.

Andrea Joy Campbell
MASSACHUSETTS AG · D

Won a second term.

Keith Ellison
MINNESOTA AG · DFL

Won a third term.

Letitia James
NEW YORK AG · D

Won reelection.

Shirley Weber
CALIF. SEC. OF STATE · D

Reelected.

Lydia York
DELAWARE AUDITOR · D

Won reelection.

Sabina Matos
R.I. LT. GOVERNOR · D

Won another term.

Cedrick Frazier
HENNEPIN CO. ATTY. · MINN.

State's first Black county attorney.

ABOUT THIS PAGE *Some results await certification. Winner photos come from public sources credited in Ebony News Today's research file, including Wikimedia Commons, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Ballotpedia and campaign and government pages. Illustrations are artwork, not photographs. Full coverage, with every winner's story, at* EBONYNEWSTODAY.COM.

Lisa Lakes Makes History as American Legion Post 191's First Woman Commander

As the historic Melbourne post marks 80 years, its new commander reflects on Army service, the women who belong in Legion leadership and the ways veterans look out for one another

Ebony News Today Spotlight
By Lisa Lakes, Marcus Smith and Audrey Grayson
Photos by Ben Cain

MELBOURNE, Fla. — Eighty years ago, 16 African American veterans returning from World War II founded what became Historic American Legion Post 191. The post endured segregation, financial hardship, the loss of property and multiple relocations. Through those changes, it remained a gathering place for veterans, their families and the Melbourne community.

As Post 191 marks its 80th anniversary, it is also welcoming Lisa Lakes, the first woman elected commander in its history. Women have contributed to the post since its early years. Lakes, who retired from the U.S. Army after 25 years of service, will now lead it into its next chapter.



Questions and answers have been edited for length and clarity.

Military Service and the Legion

1. What inspired you to join the American Legion?

After leaving the Army, I still felt a strong pull toward service. I missed being around people who understood military life, even the little things like pulling Charge of Quarters. The Legion gave me a way to reconnect with that shared experience, support veterans and their families, and keep serving my community.

2. How long have you been a member, and what changes have you seen?

I joined Post 191 in 2020. I watched the post navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and saw younger veterans gradually step into leadership. We also built stronger community ties by partnering with schools to provide snacks for children in need and helping 12 community members with free job certification training and job placement assistance.

3. Were you connected to military service personally, through family or both?

Both. I retired from the U.S. Army in 2013 after 25 years in human resource management. My father, Roy Cureaux, and my uncle, Oscar Cunningham Jr., both served in the Army. They were my heroes, and I wanted to follow in their footsteps.

4. What does Legion membership mean to you?

It's a personal commitment to honor those who served and carry forward a tradition of service, sacrifice and patriotism. I'm grateful for the chance to lead, volunteer and give back to veterans and the community.

Women in the Legion

5. What was it like joining the post as a woman veteran?

The Army taught me discipline and how to keep going when things got difficult. Most of my training was the same as the men's, though some physical fitness standards differed. At the Legion, I was often the only woman in the room or one of just a few. I felt welcomed, and I also felt the responsibility of representing women veterans in a place where we were still becoming more visible.

6. Have opportunities for women in the Legion changed since you joined?

The opportunities were already there. The perception that the Legion was a men's organization helped keep the number of women veterans low. Women can excel in any Legion position. Good leadership also means knowing who to call and how to bring people together to get a job done.

7. What challenges did you face as a woman in the organization?

The challenges were subtle and rooted in tradition. Some members underestimated me and needed time to get used to a woman speaking with authority. I had to show what I could do before my voice carried weight. Sometimes I gently reminded fellow members that I had served, just as they had, and had earned my place as a veteran in my own right.

8. Were there women in the Legion who inspired you to join?

I didn't know any women members when I joined. Now I'm working to set an example for other women veterans and encourage them to join and serve alongside me.

Community and Leadership

9. Which Legion programs or community events mean the most to you?

Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies are especially important to me. Military service creates a strong bond, and these observances give us a chance to honor the people who served and remember their sacrifices. Those days carry deep meaning for veterans and their families, and I want the community to understand why.

10. What leadership roles have you held, and what did you learn?

I served four years as finance officer, managing limited funds to keep the post afloat. As my mother would say, it was sometimes a matter of "robbing Peter to pay Paul." I had to ask which expenses could wait and which needed attention right away. I also took on building maintenance until someone else could step in. Those years taught me how to build trust and bring people together through difficult decisions.

11. What accomplishments are you most proud of?

I'm proud that we've made the post more welcoming to families, seniors and new members. I also think about the support other veterans and I gave one family during a deployment and after their service member's untimely death. We offered resources, encouragement and some stability at a time of uncertainty.

12. How does the Legion help veterans in ways people may overlook?

People see the parades and public advocacy. Some of our most meaningful work happens through partnerships with shelters, clothing drives and hygiene kits for veterans experiencing homelessness.

History and Reflection

13. Which Legion traditions are most important to preserve?

Community Memorial Day and Veterans Day observances help us honor service and pass civic values on to the next generation. Local Legion posts can keep those traditions alive by bringing veterans, families and neighbors together to take part.



14. What is one story from your years at the post that stays with you?

One summer, we held a cookout with ribs, chicken and music. I noticed a young woman sitting across the street in the heat and invited her in for lunch. She hesitated at first, then came inside. Over lunch, she told me she was a veteran and needed help. I reached out to other members, and together we connected her with a local shelter. I still see her from time to time and offer her a meal and a break from the heat.



15. How has the Legion's role in Melbourne changed?

More families, schools and local organizations now look to the post as a partner for events and outreach. Veterans also turn to us for help navigating VA benefits, finding mental health support or dealing with an emergency. People know they can come here for practical help.

16. What do you wish younger generations understood about the Legion?

I want younger veterans to see how much of our work is about looking out for one another. The Legion advocates for better mental health care, faster claims processing and stronger support for veterans and their families. When a veteran loses a job or struggles with PTSD, much of the help happens quietly.

Advice and Legacy

17. What advice would you give women considering joining the Legion?

Claim your space confidently. You earned your place through your service. Find a post where you feel comfortable and can contribute. Your presence helps shape the culture and shows younger women veterans that they belong.

18. What advice would you give younger veterans?

Stay connected with other veterans. Leaving the military can mean losing the structure, teamwork and sense of purpose you relied on every day. Build a new support network, ask for help early and use the benefits you earned, whether you need health care, mental health support or housing assistance. Share your experience, too. Every veteran has a story worth telling.

19. What do you hope the future of the American Legion looks like?

I hope to see more younger veterans, a membership that reflects the diversity of those who serve, and stronger connections among veterans across generations.

20. How would you like your service to be remembered?

I want people to remember that I showed up, consistently and quietly, without needing recognition. I want veterans and their families to know they could rely on me. Sometimes honoring someone means standing with them at a ceremony. Sometimes it means simply being there when they need you most.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

BREVARD COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE EVALUATION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING INCENTIVE STRATEGIES

In accordance with Section 420.9076 (4) & (5) of the Florida Statutes, on Thursday, November 19, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. the Brevard County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee will conduct a public hearing to hear public comment regarding its recommendations and evaluation of local government implementation, of previously recommended local housing incentive strategies, identified in Brevard County's approved State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Housing Assistance Plan. The meeting will be held in the County Commission Chambers, First Floor, Building C at the County Government Center located at 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Viera, FL 32940. Below is a summary of the incentive strategies and evaluation:

(a) Expedited Permitting: Continue process established in Resolution #06-112 and Ordinance 07-18.
(b) Impact Fee Waivers or Modifications: Continue process established in Ordinance 06-044.
(c) Density Flexibility: Allow greater flexibility increasing density levels to encourage the creation of new affordable housing within the County through use of Ordinance 07-18.
(d) Reservation of County Infrastructure: Continue on-going concurrency management system which ensures public facilities and services needed to support development.
(e) Accessory Dwelling Units and Tiny Homes: Review the County Code definitions of accessory unit structures and tiny homes, uses and applications.
(f) Parking and Setbacks: Allow flexible parking and setbacks through Ordinance 07-18.
(g) Flexible Lot Configuration: Allow flexible lot configuration through Ordinance 07-18.
(h) Street Requirements: Review projects through Ordinance 07-18.
(i) Ongoing Process Review: Continue the ongoing review process adopted in Resolution #06-112.
(j) Land Bank Inventory: Monitor and update the land inventory per Ordinance 07-18.
(k) Support of Development Near Transportation Hubs and Major Employment Centers and Mixed-Use Developments: Continue development consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan and Ordinance 07-18.

A more detailed copy can be obtained for review by contacting Alan Woolwich or Natasha Jones at (321) 633-2007 or via e-mail ***alan.woolwich@brevardfl.gov*** or ***natasha.jones@brevardfl.gov*** or can be obtained at ***https://www.brevardfl.gov/HousingAndHumanServices/Announcements***

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons needing special accommodations or an interpreter to participate in the proceedings, please notify Alan Woolwich at the Housing and Human Services Department, no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting at (321) 633-2007, Florida Relay 7-1-1

Persons requiring special language services should contact the County's Title VI. Nondiscrimination Coordinator: Leslie Jones, Title VI. Nondiscrimination Coordinator, 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way Bldg. B Viera, FL 32940, Phone 321-633-2034, Fax 321-633-2036, Florida Relay 7-1-1 or email ***TitleVI.NondiscriminationCoordinator@brevardfl.gov***

If a person desires to appeal any decision made by this Board, agency or commission (as appropriate) with respect to any matter considered at this meeting or hearing, such a person will need a record of this proceeding and that, for such purposes, such person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of this proceeding is made, at his/her own expense, which record includes testimony and evidence upon which any such appeal is to be based.

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY



Three Things the VA Needs to See

You served. You got hurt. Why did the VA say no?

What veterans need to show in a disability claim and how to fill gaps in the evidence



By Tony "TJ" Johnson
AVeteran BenefitsAdvocate
AVet2VetsAdvocates

You were sick in the service. It is in your records. You filed your claim. The VA denied it.

I hear that story every week. Often, the claim is missing a piece of evidence.

VA disability compensation generally depends on showing that a current disability is connected to your service. A record of what happened in the military is one part of that proof.

I have lived with VA disability compensation for more than 30 years. I have worked claims as a Veteran Service Officer and as an advocate. Here is what I wish every veteran knew before hitting submit.

The three legs of the stool

Think of a direct service-connection claim as a three-legged stool. Each leg represents a piece of evidence the VA looks for.

1. A current disability. Show that you have the condition now. A current diagnosis or medical records can help document it.

2. An in-service event, injury, illness or exposure. Show what happened during qualifying service, such as an illness, injury, toxic exposure or traumatic event.

3. A nexus. Show how your current disability is linked to what happened in service. A medical opinion explaining that the condition is "at least as likely as not" related to service can help establish that link.

I tell every veteran I work with the same thing: "It's not what you think you have. It is what we can prove you have."

When the evidence leaves a question open, the VA may schedule a Compensation and Pension (C&P) exam to help decide the claim. Some claims, such as those involving presumptive conditions, follow different evidence rules.

What your old records can show

An old diagnosis in your service treatment records can show what happened in service. The VA also needs evidence of how the condition affects you now.

Current medical records can show what symptoms you have, how severe they are, and how they affect your work and daily life. If you have gone years without treatment, a current evaluation can help document what you are experiencing today.

VA hospitals and clinics provide treatment. The VA benefits system decides claims. Use your health care visits to get evaluated and treated, then gather the records that support your claim.

If your claim was denied, read the decision letter to see what evidence was missing. A Supplemental Claim generally requires new and relevant evidence. Depending on the reason for the denial, a current diagnosis or a medical opinion may address the gap.

My first question to veterans is simple. Are you being treated for it right now? If the answer is no, that is often where we start.

Example one: the diagnosis from 20 years ago

The names below are made up. The situations are not.

Mike served in the Army from 2001 to 2005. In 2003, sick call diagnosed him with sleep apnea after a sleep study. It is right there in his service treatment records.

Mike got out, stopped using the CPAP, and never went back to a doctor for it. In 2026 he files a claim with one sentence: "I was diagnosed with sleep apnea in the Army."

What Mike has: Leg two. The in-service diagnosis.

What Mike is missing: Leg one and leg three. His claim includes neither current medical evidence of sleep apnea nor an opinion linking it to the 2003 diagnosis.

What happens if he files as is: The VA may order a C&P exam to help determine whether Mike still has sleep apnea and whether it is related to service.

What a fully developed claim looks like for Mike:

- A current evaluation and diagnosis, with a sleep study if needed
- His 2003 service treatment record highlighted and attached
- A personal statement explaining his symptoms then and now, and why he stopped treatment
- A statement from his spouse about his snoring and stopped breathing at night
- A medical opinion connecting today's diagnosis to the one made in service

Same veteran. Same history. Completely different claim.

Example two: the PACT Act veteran

Denise deployed to Iraq in 2008. She lived and worked downwind of the base burn pit for a year. She heard about the PACT Act on the news and filed a claim for "burn pits."

The PACT Act is real help. Signed in 2022, it added more than 20 presumptive conditions for burn pit and other toxic exposures, including a list of cancers and breathing conditions like asthma diagnosed after service, chronic sinusitis, chronic rhinitis, chronic bronchitis and COPD. It also expanded covered Agent Orange locations and added two presumptive conditions for eligible veterans, high blood pressure and monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS).

If you served in a covered location during a qualifying period, the VA can presume the exposure. If you have a covered condition and meet the eligibility requirements, the VA can also presume the link to service.

You still need evidence of a current condition on the list.

What Denise has: Service in a covered location. Leg two is presumed.

What Denise is missing: A named condition. Her claim identifies the exposure. It needs to identify the condition she is claiming. She has had sinus infections and shortness of breath for years and has yet to be evaluated for them.

What a fully developed claim looks like for Denise:

- A visit to her doctor or the VA to get her sinus and breathing problems diagnosed by name, such as chronic sinusitis or asthma
- A toxic exposure screening through VA health care, if she is enrolled, to discuss her exposure history
- Her DD-214 and deployment orders showing where and when she served
- A claim that lists each diagnosed condition separately, not "burn pits"

Once Denise has a diagnosis, she can check whether the condition and her service qualify for the presumption.

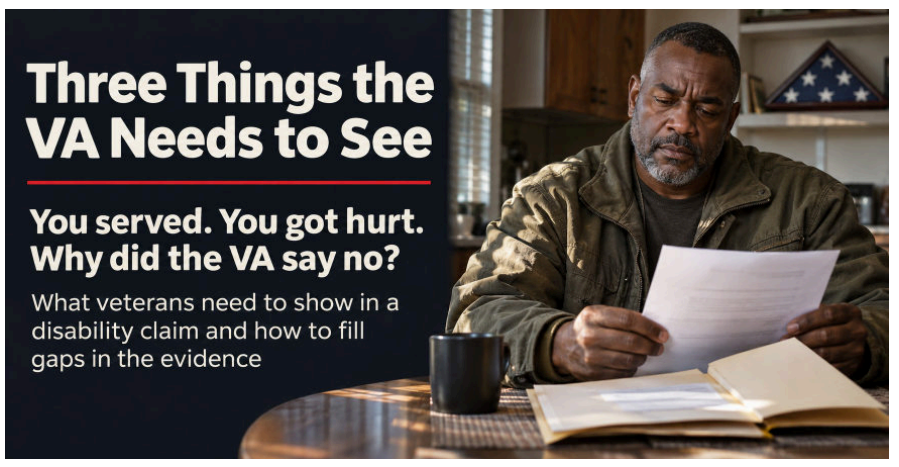
Example three: the PTSD diagnosis with no event on file

Carlos is a Navy veteran. He has been seeing a VA mental health provider for two years. His provider diagnosed him with PTSD. Carlos files a claim and attaches his VA treatment notes.

His treatment notes leave out the in-service event he believes caused his PTSD.

What Carlos has: Leg one. A current PTSD diagnosis from a qualified provider. That is a strong start.

What Carlos is missing: Leg two and leg three. The VA needs a medical link between his current symptoms and an in-service stressor. The evidence needed to establish the stressor depends on what happened and which rules apply.



This is where many veterans get stuck. Some never talked about what happened. Some did not think it "counted." A shipboard fire. A training accident. A friend's suicide. Fear of an attack while stationed overseas. Military sexual trauma. These can all be stressors.

What a fully developed claim looks like for Carlos:

- VA Form 21-0781, the stressor statement, with dates, locations, unit and names as best he can recall
- Statements from shipmates, family or friends who saw the change in him or heard about the event at the time
- Any records that back up the event, such as ship logs, unit histories, news reports or changes in his performance evaluations
- A note from his treating provider that names the specific stressor and states his PTSD is at least as likely as not caused by it

The VA has relaxed rules for some situations, including combat, fear of hostile military or terrorist activity, and military sexual trauma. In those cases, the VA may accept different kinds of evidence to establish what happened.

Carlos does not need a perfect paper trail. He needs a clear, honest account and as much support as he can gather before he files.

Your toolkit before you file

Gathering your evidence before filing can help the VA review your claim. If you use the Fully Developed Claims program, submit your supporting evidence with the application and attend any exam the VA schedules.

1. Consider an intent to file. If you need time to gather records, VA Form 21-0966 or a call to the VA can protect a potential effective date if you complete the claim within one year. Starting an eligible claim online through a verified VA.gov account can also record your intent.

2. Get your records. Request your service treatment records and your full personnel file. Get copies of your current VA and private medical records.

3. Get a current evaluation. Ask your provider to document your condition, symptoms and how they affect you.

4. Write your statement. VA Form 21-4138 lets you tell your story in plain words: what happened, when, and how it affects your life today.

5. Get witness statements. VA Form 21-10210 lets a spouse, family member or fellow service member describe what they saw.

6. Ask your provider for an opinion. When a medical link is needed, ask your provider to explain how your condition relates to service and what evidence supports that opinion.

7. Use the right forms for the claim. Use VA Form 21-526EZ for a disability compensation application. VA Form 21-0781 can help document an in-service traumatic event for a mental health claim.

For help, contact the Brevard County Veterans Services Office or look for a VA-accredited representative through a veterans service organization such as the VFW, American Legion or DAV. VA-accredited claims agents can also assist.

Build it right the first time

Before you submit a direct service-connection claim, check for all three pieces. What is the disability today? What happened in service? What evidence connects the two?

If you spot a gap, gather what you can and get help from an accredited representative if you need it. You earned these benefits. Let's make sure your claim tells the whole story.

TJ Johnson is an Air Force retiree and veterans benefits advocate in Melbourne, Florida. He has lived with VA disability compensation for more than 30 years and now advocates for disabled veterans, surviving spouses and dependents across Brevard County. Educate. Empower. Advocate.

This article is general information, not legal advice. Every claim is different, and no one can guarantee a rating.

Sources

- The PACT Act and your VA benefits, VA.gov
- Specific environmental hazards and presumptive conditions, VA.gov
- Evidence needed for a VA disability claim
- Your intent to file a VA claim
- VA Form 21-0781
- Fully Developed Claims program





Brevard Honors Its Veterans With a Night of Music, Service and Community



By Genice Brown

COCOA, Fla. — From the red-carpet welcome to the closing poem, the Brevard Veteran Coalition's annual gala gave veterans and their supporters a night to celebrate service, recognize community leaders and fill a dance floor.

On Nov. 14, guests arriving at the Holiday Inn Express in Cocoa found a quiet entrance. A red carpet led them to a courtyard, where members of the Viera High School ROTC stood in uniform and welcomed guests through a second set of doors. Inside, linen-draped tables set the scene for an evening of floor-length gowns, sharp suits and familiar faces.

Gala Chairwoman Rosalind Riddick welcomed guests as DJ Devo played the kind of hits that made people say, "That's my song!" A Melbourne native and long-time Brevard favorite, DJ Devo has entertained many of the gala's guests for decades. A backdrop featuring the Brevard Veteran Coalition logo drew a line of guests waiting to take photos.

The annual fundraiser capped Veterans Week and recognized people whose work supports those who have served. Coalition President Rodney Greene presented the Visionary Award to Chean Colclough, who designed the coalition's logo. Greene thanked Colclough for "putting a vision into meaningful action." The logo represents the branches of the military and can be seen on apparel worn by coalition supporters around the community.

The coalition began with a conversation under a tree at the Eddie Lee Community Center in Melbourne. Four years later, the organization, which relies on donations, draws more than 100 people to its meetings. It has outgrown its previous meeting spaces and needs a larger venue.

After a solo performance of the national anthem, guests settled in for dinner and conversation. Then Voices of Classic Soul took the stage. The band opened with a familiar Temptations beat, and the crowd sang along as former Temptations singer



Glenn Leonard performed live.

Joe Coleman brought spins and dance moves to the stage, and when "My Girl" began, guests sang, danced or did both. The dance floor filled shoulder to shoulder as Jerome Jackson paid tribute to the late Frankie Beverly with "We Are One." Guests raised an index finger in unison. Later, the three singers drew on their doo-wop harmonies for the Drifters' "This Magic Moment."

The coalition also recognized four honorees for their service and advocacy.

• David Glen Outlaw received the Hero Award for mentoring boys and young men through "Tied Together."







• Ebony Maynard received the Presidential Award for her leadership in health care and her work providing services to veterans.

• Daffodil Bailey received a Woman of Valor Award for her work serving veterans experiencing homelessness, including providing more





than 981 hygiene bags.

• Their Voice of Hope received a Woman of Valor Award for advocating for the inclusion of women veterans and working to ensure they never feel forgotten.

Judge McGee closed the evening by reciting Kelly Strong's poem Freedom







Is Not Free. After a night of music and dancing, the poem brought the room back to the reason everyone had gathered.

I heard the sound of Taps one night,
When everything was still;
I listened to the bugler play,
And felt a sudden chill;

191 Band's Soul and Funk Debut Reunites Old Friends at Post 191



By Genice Brown

MELBOURNE, Fla. — After months of rehearsals, the 191 Band made its debut at Historic American Legion Post 191 on Oct. 30, 2026. What began as a Halloween party turned into a reunion as former classmates from the 1970s spotted one another for the first time in years. DJ Dre spun classic R&B, the Post 191 Auxiliary served chili dogs, and Marquita, second vice president of Auxiliary Unit 191, decorated the room for the occasion.

Lead singer SanDral, also known as Faye, kicked off the set with a growl on James Brown's "I Got You (I Feel Good)." The night brought back memories of Wednesday nights at the Tiki Lounge, when admission was a dollar and she and her friends would walk if they couldn't get a ride. She used to come to Post 191 to dance. This time, she was onstage singing Betty Wright's "Tonight Is the Night," with Brevard saxophonist French Frye taking a solo.

Veteran and bandleader Darrell "DB" Bursey Sr. formed the group after talking with fellow veteran and District 1 Councilman Marcus Smith, the post's second vice commander. With support from former commander Carl Finnerson, they set out to bring live soul and funk back to the area. Bursey, who played tenor saxophone as a young soldier in Germany, built the band around live instruments and vocals. The musicians have funded the group themselves and are seeking their first paid booking to help cover equipment, rehearsal and travel costs.

I opened Betty Wright's "Clean Up Woman" on trumpet, and the dance floor picked up again. I started playing at age 7 in the Bronx and grew up in Hollis, Queens, as did our lead guitarist, Clay. He channeled B.B. King from his guitar stool on "The Thrill Is Gone." Today, I play in the music ministry at Greater Allen AME Chapel in Melbourne and serve as Auxiliary Unit 191's chaplain.

When Dexter played the familiar bass line from the Staple Singers' "I'll Take You There," Vanessa, who performs as Foxx'E Lady, moved through the room singing with the crowd. She took a moment to acknowledge veteran Joseph McNeil, whose mother, Margree McNeil, had recently died at 103. Margree was Auxiliary Unit 191's first president.

Near the end of the set, Bursey took the microphone for Cameo's "Word Up!" and hands went up across the room. Musical director Nate took a keyboard solo, and drummer Edgar "EJ" Jones, a Melbourne native who played in the Stone High School marching band, got to play for former classmates again.

For the finale, SanDral and Foxx'E Lady led "Before I Let Go" and invited Pharaoh, a young man in the audience, to sing with the band. The

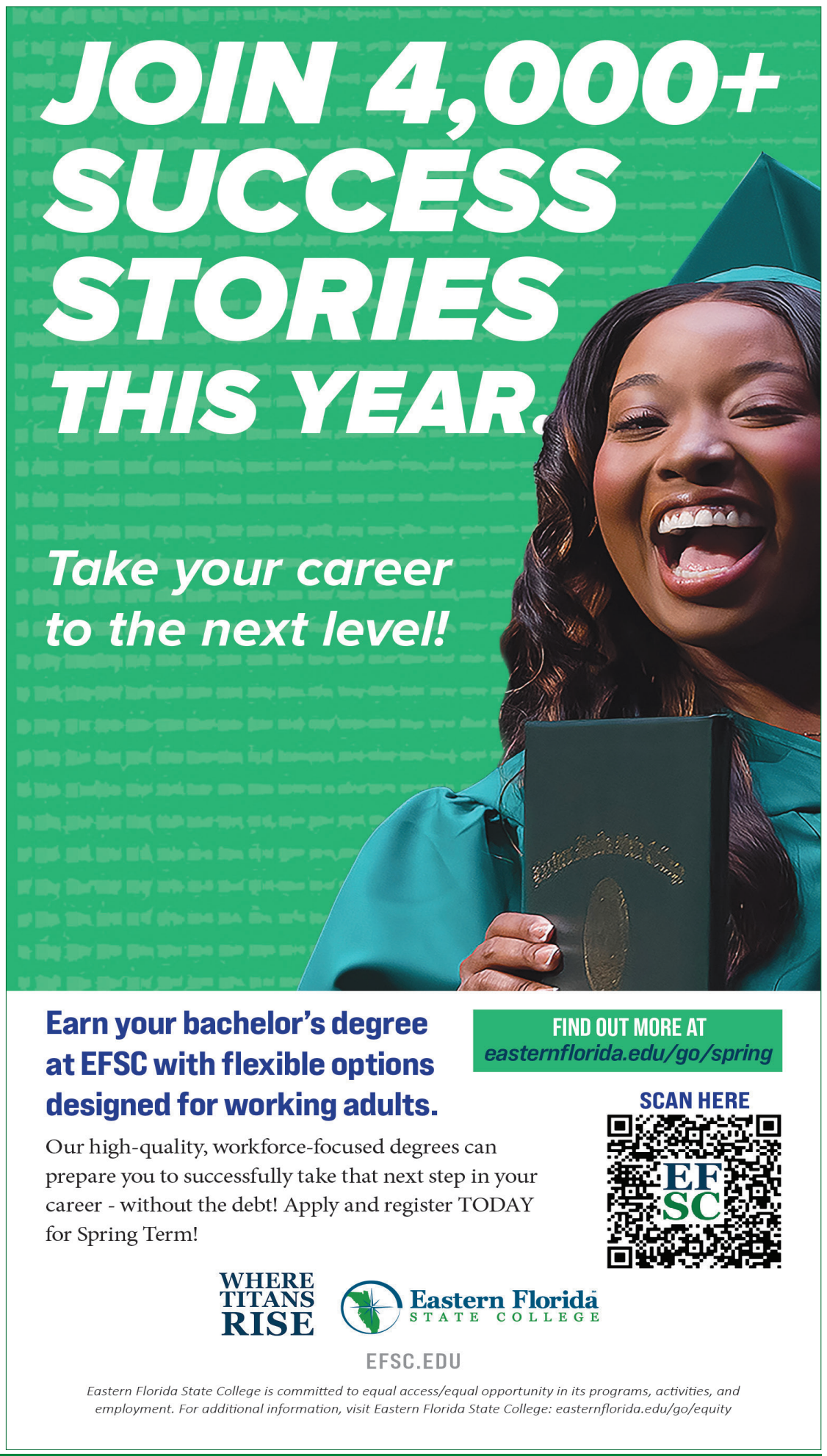








group thanked Post 191's leadership, the community and local musicians who helped make the debut possible, including Harmonica Mike, who has performed with the band and provided audiovisual support.



Brevard Veterans Coalition Brings Veterans and Students Together at Eau Gallie High







By Genice "GG" Brown

MELBOURNE, Fla. — Veterans, students and community supporters gathered at Eau Gallie High School on Nov. 7, 2026, for the Brevard Veterans Coalition's monthly meeting. Coalition President Rodney Greene and Chairwoman Rosalind Riddick coordinated the gathering, which featured a hot breakfast and presentations on stress and trauma, identity theft and health care resources for veterans.

The aroma of scrambled eggs, hot grits and baked apples filled the school library as veterans from across Brevard County took their seats. The donation-supported coalition has outgrown several meeting spaces over the years. The school's open library gave the growing group more room to gather.

The meeting opened with prayer, followed by remarks from Courtenay Blunt of Sisters in Arms, who also serves as a chapter president of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. Founded by mothers seeking greater opportunities for their children, the organization encourages young people to serve their communities. At the meeting, its young members put that mission into practice by serving breakfast to veterans.

Crystal Turman, an Air Force veteran, spouse, mother and licensed clinical professional who founded Well Spring Brain Care, spoke about how the brain responds to stress and trauma. Using the phrase "past being present," she described how earlier experiences can shape a person's responses today. She also discussed how treatment can help people regain a sense of control.

One of the morning's highlights was an interactive presentation on identity theft by Twila Smith, a Florida A&M University graduate with FBI training. Smith used music and examples to engage the audience. "Imagine all of your money gone!" she said. She walked attendees through romance scams, messages claiming an account had been overcharged and phishing attempts. She urged anyone affected by a scam to seek help, even if they felt embarrassed or regretful.

In a personal moment, a woman veteran told the group that she received support and services within 24 hours of contacting Greene for help. The coalition has grown its network of supporters across Brevard County through mentorship, direct assistance and community outreach. It relies on donations and has yet to receive grant funding.

Ebony Maynard of EM Healthcare & Associates closed the presentations with an overview of the clinic's services, which include wellness visits, assistance with nexus letters and compensation and pension (C&P) exams. She discussed how the clinic supports veterans navigating paperwork and approvals that can delay care.

Attendees also visited tables hosted by 2nd Mission Give Back, Inc., a faith-based charity that serves veterans experiencing homelessness, and the Vet Center, which provides counseling and support to eligible veterans and their families.

The Sphinx Academy Wins Three Trophies in Debate Debut

Three weeks of Brevard youth programming also brought 48 Scouts to a merit badge event and gave students pocket copies of the U.S. Constitution



By Ebony News Today Staff

MELBOURNE, Fla. | October 2026

Four Brevard County students entered their first speech and debate tournament on Oct. 10. Three came home with trophies. J. Brown won Informative Speaking, K. Ford won Novice Extemporaneous Speaking, and L. Lee took second in Original Oratory at Lake Mary High School. K. Metelus also competed for the Academy.

The Sphinx Academy launched its Speech & Debate program in February and added weekly virtual coaching in September. The Iota Beta Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., runs the mentorship program, which meets monthly at Keiser University's Melbourne campus.



Scouts Explore Careers and Earn Merit Badges

A week before the tournament, Alpha Merit Badge University brought 48 Scouts to Keiser University in partnership with Scouting America. Twelve counselors and 18 volunteers supported 15 merit badge offerings, including Artificial Intelligence, Engineering, Oceanography, and Space Exploration. Dentistry drew the most registrations with 22, followed by Traffic Safety with 16.

West Melbourne Mayor Andrea Young presented a proclamation recognizing the event and spoke with Scouts working on the Citizenship in the Community merit badge. By the end of the day, counselors had signed more than 29 blue cards for badges earned.



A Pocket Constitution for Future Debates

At an Oct. 24 workshop at Keiser University, students learned about voting rights, civil rights advocacy, the right to counsel, and how city decisions affect their daily lives. Speakers included David Jackson of Alpha Phi Alpha, Central Brevard NAACP President Ava Taylor, Assistant Public Defender Andrea Fant, and Palm Bay City Council member Kenny Johnson.

Students took home pocket copies of the U.S. Constitution and plain-language guides to use in future debate rounds. The workshop reinforced skills they practice in competition: researching an issue, supporting a position with evidence, and disagreeing respectfully.

November and December Schedule

• Nov. 21 | College tour of the University of South Florida and the University of Tampa. Departure at 6 a.m. Round-trip transportation provided. The interest form was due Nov. 7.

• Dec. 1 | Iota Beta Lambda scholarship applications open.

• Dec. 1 | Culver's Fundraiser Night, 5 to 8 p.m., 4611 N. Wickham Road, Melbourne.

• Dec. 19 | Vehicle care workshop, 9:30 a.m. to noon at Keiser University. Scholars will learn to change a tire, check fluids, jump-start a car, and read dashboard warning lights.





Get Involved

Enrollment is free for young men in middle and high school. The Academy also welcomes mentors, workshop leaders, merit badge counselors, and scholarship sponsors.

Visit thesphinxacademy.org/contact to enroll, email thesphinxacademy06@gmail.com, or call (860) 803-8674.



DO YOU NEED HELP FINDING AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE?

THE SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM MAY BE ABLE TO HELP!

CONTACT US TODAY OR SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

(321) 637-1800

Sponsorship by the Early Learning Coalition of Brevard County and the State of Florida, Division of Early learning.

EBONY NEWS TODAY
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT · SPACE COAST
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2026 · EBONYNEWSTODAY.COM

RED CARPET PREMIERE · DECEMBER 12

Some Secrets Should Stay Buried. *This One Is Getting a Red Carpet.*

AMPD UP PRODUCTIONS brings A Stiff Situation 2: Calvin's Turn, the sequel to the Space Coast's 2025 People's Choice winner, to Premiere Theaters Oaks 10 for an evening of film, glamour and homegrown talent.

BY EBONY NEWS TODAY STAFF · MELBOURNE, FLA. · PHOTO: PATIENCE AND SARAH, COURTESY AMPD UP PRODUCTIONS

SATURDAY, DEC. 12, 2026 ★ 5:30–8:30 PM ★ PREMIERE THEATERS OAKS 10 · MELBOURNE

ON THE EVENING OF SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, the lights outside Premiere Theaters Oaks 10 in Melbourne will burn a little brighter. The red carpet will be rolled out, the cameras will be waiting, and the Space Coast's independent film community will gather for the premiere of *A Stiff Situation 2: Calvin's Turn*, the new short film from Melbourne-based AMPD UP PRODUCTIONS.

From 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., guests are invited to walk the carpet, take their seats for the screening and stay for a reception with food, drinks and a showcase of Brevard County and Space Coast creatives presenting their own work. Tickets are on sale now at ampdupproductions.com.

For a local production, it's a big night. And it has a story behind it.

FROM PEOPLE'S CHOICE TO PART TWO

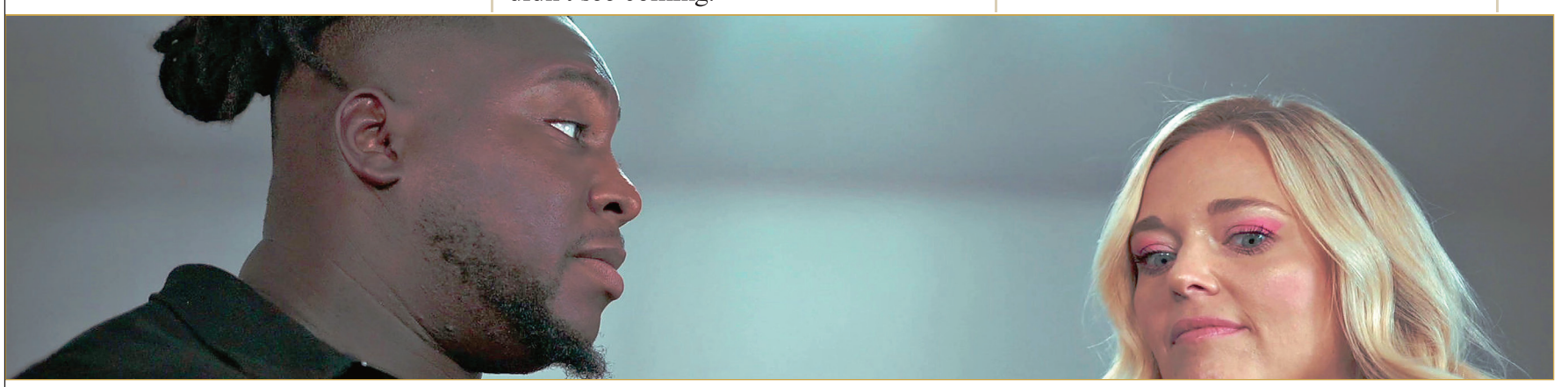
The original *A Stiff Situation* started out small. The comedy was filmed in June 2024, written by Antonia Parris and Dan Stinston III, and directed and edited by Parris. Its premise is pitch-black and hard to forget. A woman tries to get back into dating, and everything goes sideways when she discovers her ex-boyfriend has been taxidermied. The result is a run of awkward encounters and emotional chaos that audiences didn't see coming.

In October 2025, the film screened at the 27th annual Melbourne Independent Filmmakers Festival. The three-day festival ran October 16–18 at the same Premiere Theaters Oaks 10 where the sequel will premiere. That year's theme, "Space Dance," honored Florida's Space Coast heritage and NASA's human spaceflight program. More than 50 shorts, features and panels filled the program, and the festival's proceeds supported the No Limits Academy, which serves children with complex physical disabilities.

When the awards were announced, *A Stiff Situation* took **People's Choice for Best Film**. The film had also been nominated for Best Comedy. But People's Choice comes straight from the audience, from the people who bought tickets, sat in the dark and decided what they loved. For a hometown production, few honors mean more.

> ***"When A Stiff Situation won People's Choice at the Melbourne Independent Film Festival in 2025, the Space Coast told us they wanted more, so we gave Calvin his turn."***
> — ANTONIA, WRITER & DIRECTOR

The audience asked for more. AMPD UP answered with a sequel.



CALVIN AND LYDIA. A PRODUCTION STILL FROM *A STIFF SITUATION 2: CALVIN'S TURN*. COURTESY AMPD UP PRODUCTIONS.



THE OFFICIAL POSTER.

IT'S CALVIN'S TURN

A Stiff Situation 2: Calvin's Turn runs 15 minutes. That's short enough to be lean and long enough to land its punches. This time the story belongs to Calvin, and the setup tells you everything about the film's macabre sense of humor: **his late ex, Sarah, is still in the house.**

The poster sets the mood with its tagline, "Some secrets should stay buried." Two faces fill the frame. One woman leans in to whisper, while the other stares straight out at the viewer, half-hidden, as if she already knows something you don't. The promise is the same mix that won over the 2025 audience. The comedy is morbid, the stakes are personal, and you can't quite look away.

THE WOMAN BEHIND THE LENS



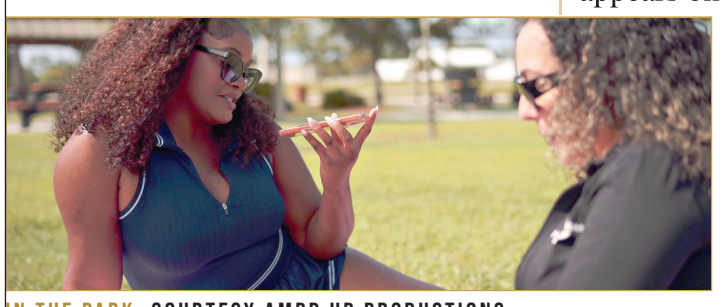
ANTONIA PARRIS

Antonia Parris wrote, produced and directed *Calvin's Turn*. AMPD UP PRODUCTIONS is the independent film arm of AMPD UP Media Group, a full-production media group based in Melbourne. Dan Stinston III, her co-writer on the original film, returns as co-director and also appears on screen.

Filmmaking is only one part of the AMPD UP world. Antonia also hosts **AMPD UP LIVE**, the group's interview platform and podcast. It spotlights Space Coast entrepreneurs, artists and leaders, covers red carpet events, and runs under the motto "Everyone has a vision, a craft or a mission." The production side has made the drama short *Asher Knows* and *Texture*, a creative collaboration filmed in Brooklyn and Manhattan that aims to uplift and inspire women through events, workshops and projects.

That background explains why the premiere is built the way it is. Antonia has spent years putting other local creatives in front of the camera and the microphone, so it makes sense that her big night shares the spotlight too.

> ***"This premiere is about more than our film. It's a night to celebrate the incredible creatives right here in Brevard County and show that you don't have to leave home to make movies people love."***
> — ANTONIA, WRITER & DIRECTOR



IN THE PARK. COURTESY AMPD UP PRODUCTIONS.



BEHIND THE WHEEL. COURTESY AMPD UP PRODUCTIONS.

BEFORE YOU GO

WHEN Saturday, Dec. 12, 2026 · 5:30–8:30 PM
WHERE Premiere Theaters Oaks 10, 1800 W. Hibiscus Blvd., Melbourne, FL 32901

TICKETS: AMPDUPPRODUCTIONS.COM

THE ENSEMBLE

The sequel brings back several members of the original's award-winning cast, including Kalio Young, Ashanti Robertson, Heaven Walker, Isaiah Franklin and Ackeem Ferguson, and adds a group of new faces. The full ensemble:

- KALIO YOUNG
- ASHANTI ROBERTSON
- KEVIN ROBINSON
- WHITNEY WARD
- DAN STINSTON III
- JULIANA RIOS
- HEAVEN WALKER
- SHAYLEN DUNN
- SHELLEY "BUDDY" ROWE
- ACKEEM FERGUSON
- NADIA JOHNSON
- ANTONIA PARRIS
- ISAIAH FRANKLIN
- ERIKA BORRERO (V.O.)

For many of these performers, a red carpet premiere at a commercial multiplex is a milestone. It lets them be seen, photographed and celebrated in their own hometown, in front of the neighbors, family members and fellow artists who make up the Space Coast's creative scene.

MORE THAN A SCREENING

Many premieres end when the credits roll. This one keeps going. After the screening, AMPD UP will host a reception with food and drinks, plus a dedicated spotlight on local Brevard County and Space Coast creatives presenting their work.

That choice matters. Independent artists in mid-sized markets often hear that the real work, the real audience and the real opportunities are somewhere else, in Atlanta, Los Angeles or New York. With this premiere, AMPD UP is arguing that the Space Coast already has the talent and the audience, and that a local film can win a hometown crowd, grow into a franchise and fill a theater for its next chapter.

For anyone in Brevard who writes, shoots, acts, designs, sings or builds, the evening is also a chance to network in a room full of people doing the same thing.

DRESS THE PART

It's a red carpet, so treat it like one. Arrive early for photos, bring your best holiday glamour, and come ready to cheer for the people who made it happen. Coming just two weeks before Christmas, it's an easy holiday night out: a story, a party and a celebration of the Space Coast all in one evening.

And if you haven't seen the first film yet, now's the time. You can watch the original *A Stiff Situation* at ampdupproductions.com. The audience that crowned it wanted to know what happened next. On December 12, they'll find out.

Media and interview inquiries: Antonia, Writer & Director, AMPD UP PRODUCTIONS · ampdupproductions1@gmail.com · (321) 877-5107

★ ★ ★

"The Heartbeat of Our Community" E-mail us to Place Your Display Ad Today at ebonynewstoday@gmail.com

EVENT CALENDER













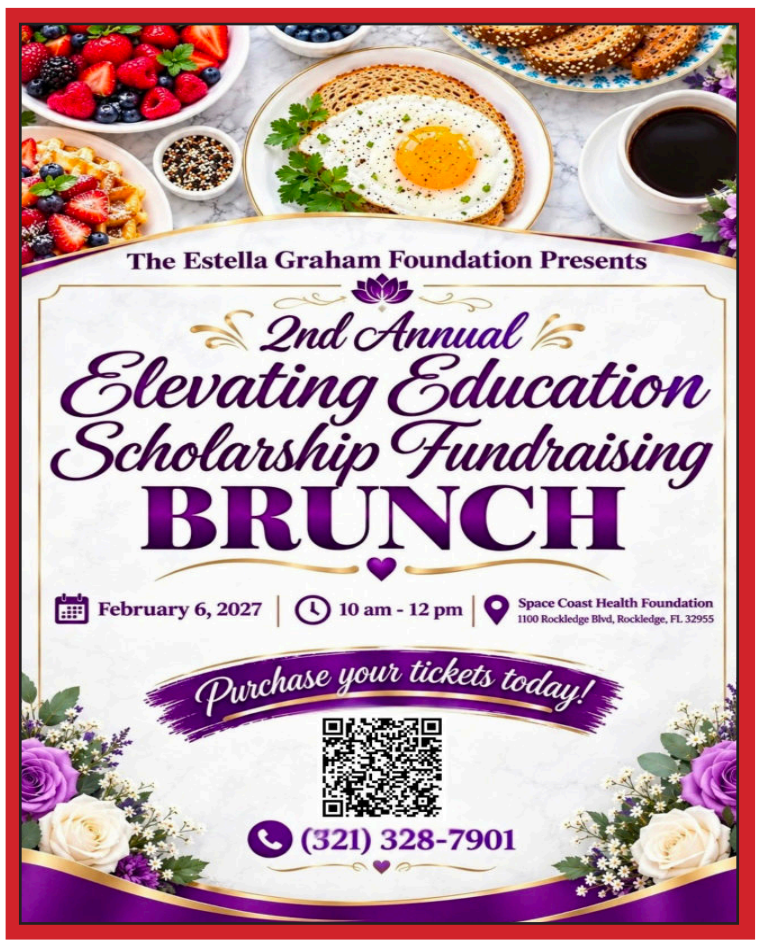




BLACK HISTORY CHALLENGE JANUARY 16, 2027, MLK WKND
SATURDAY 9A-1P
FELLOWSHIP HALL
METROPOLITAN MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
474 KING STREET COCOA, FL

TEAMS OF 5, ELEMENTARY 8-13, ADULTS 14 UP COMPETE FOR PRIZES
GAME STYLE: A STATEMENT ANSWERED BY A QUESTION
1ST $100 PER PERSON INCLUDING THE COACH
2ND $75 PER PERSON, INCLUDES THE COACH
3RD $50 PER PERSON, INCLUDES THE COACH
$5 ENTRY FOR ADULTS, CHILDREN 7-18 FREE, FREE AUDIENCE GIFTS DRAW
FOR TEAM REGISTRATION/CURRICULUM REQUESTS:
MYMEDICALINC2012@GMAIL.COM
SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TEXT 563-340-1859
BLACK HISTORY CHALLENGE: IF WE DONT KNOW OUR HISTORY EVENTUALLY IT WILL BE LOST

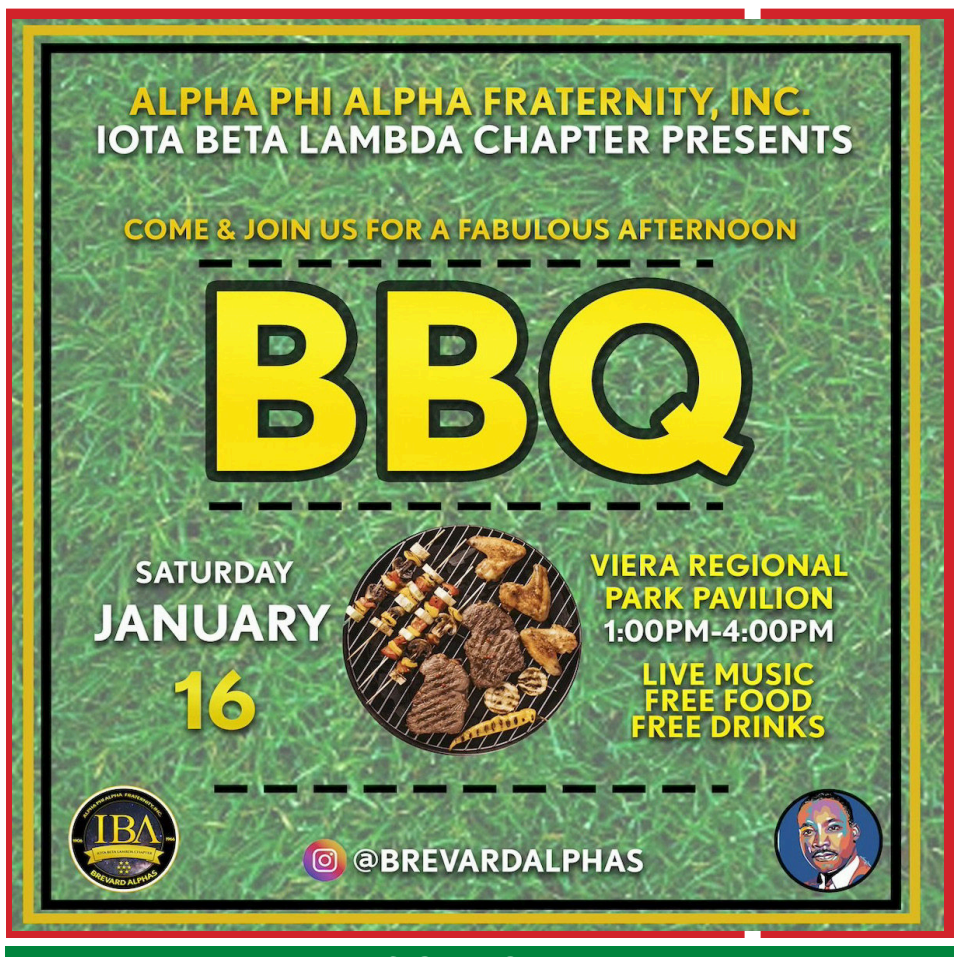




NOTICE OF INTENT TO REGISTER FICTITIOUS NAME

NOTICE UNDER FICTITIOUS NAME LAW PURSUANT TO SECTION 50.011, FLORIDA STATUTES

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of Prayer Surge Network located at 4110 Eola Avenue, Titusville, in Brevard County, Florida, intends to register the said name with the Division of Corporations of the Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida.
Dated at Titusville, Brevard County, Florida, this 3rd day of November, 2026.
Owner: Angela Denise Williams



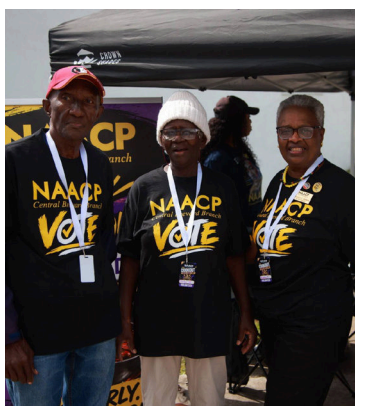


A Cookout With a Purpose: Central Brevard Neighbors Gathered for Fellowship and Early Voting

NAACP Central Brevard Branch connected a community celebration with civic participation ahead of the election









By Ebony News Today Staff

BREVARD COUNTY, Fla. — Food, music and fellowship brought neighbors together. A shared commitment to civic participation gave the gathering its purpose.

Ahead of the election, the NAACP Central Brevard Branch hosted a cookout that combined community celebration with an opportunity to vote. According to the branch's public recap, participants gathered, traveled together to an early voting site, cast their ballots and returned to continue the festivities.

The outing linked a familiar community tradition with a practical act of participation: going to the polls together.

Photographs supplied from the gathering captured smiling neighbors, group portraits, conversations beneath outdoor tents and volunteers wearing NAACP shirts. Younger and older attendees appeared throughout the images, reflecting the gathering's multigenerational character. Food and an inflatable play area added to the welcoming atmosphere.

The branch emphasized that the occasion reached beyond the cookout itself. Fellowship provided a setting for people to connect, while the trip to the early voting site placed civic participation at the center of the day.

In its recap, the branch thanked the sponsors, community partners, volunteers and attendees who helped make the gathering possible. Their contributions supported an event that brought people together around both celebration and purpose.

"We didn't just come together for a cookout. We came together with a purpose," the branch stated.

That purpose carried through the gathering as neighbors spent time with one another, participated in the voting process and returned to celebrate their shared effort.

With the election now concluded, the cookout stood as a reminder of how community organizations helped connect fellowship with civic engagement. For Central Brevard, it offered a hopeful portrait of different generations coming together and making their voices heard.





Source: Public recap supplied by the NAACP Central Brevard Branch; photographs provided for this report. The supplied recap did not specify the event date, location or attendance total.





TO: EVERYONE 18 & OLDER
FROM: DEPT OF GOOD FUN
GIFT RESPONSIBLY

The Department of Good Fun reminds you that good fun is responsible fun. So, when you're gifting Florida Lottery tickets this season, make sure you're only giving them to adults 18 and older. From all of us at the Florida Lottery, Happy Holidays.

FLORIDA Lottery
it's good fun®

PLAY RESPONSIBLY 18+

For more information on responsible gifting and gaming, visit floridalottery.com/play-responsibly