



# The Real Views



The Premiere Multicultural Newspaper of Louisiana

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## The Power of Unity in Minority Communities

**By: Latorria Freeman,**  
Publisher

Now more than ever, it has become important for minority communities to embrace themselves and their fellows to create a strong bond rooted in unity. By becoming one and supporting one another, minority communities can make their place and create a position for themselves within the dominant culture without having to cut ties with their own culture, traditions, and heritage. Unity within minority communities allows people to rise up, occupy previously uncharted spaces for their respective community, and accomplish new milestones.

An alliance among ethnic groups and racial minorities can help them not only do good for their communities, but it can also help them diversify popular culture with their unique heritage, thus making the world a more colorful, vibrant, and inclusive place for all.

### The Importance of Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism refers to the practice of accepting all racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, along with their views, opinions, and their contributions. All leading nations of the world need to embrace multiculturalism to ensure that voices from different communities are brought to the forefront and that the experience of being a minority is understood and respected by the dominant majority. Multiculturalism is also important because it urges the majority population to embrace and respect their differences with minority groups.

Embracing multiculturalism on any level allows ethnic groups to rise above adversity, unite in their unique identity, and contribute to the progress of the entire nation. Ethnic minority members, who are empowered to embrace their identity, can bring something unique to the table and fill important roles in society. History is full of African Americans who only needed one opportunity to make immense societal contributions. Contributions that continue to live on to this day.

### How Different Cultures Can Thrive in One Place

While it has been a popular belief for centuries that a society or a nation must live according to one dominant culture, it has been proven otherwise. Diversity is the key to success on all fronts! By embracing the idea of unity in diversity and multiculturalism, it becomes possible for different cultures and minorities to thrive simultaneously within one community. Every cultural and ethnic group lives with its own unique wisdom, knowledge, perspective, and point of view. When these differences are combined into one pool of knowledge, it becomes possible for communities to accomplish great things!

By supporting and uplifting members of one's community, each citizen can do their part in positioning their community at the helm of innovation, success, visibility, and inclusivity. By starting relationships with mutual harmony and compassion for one another, people can do good for their communities that will outlive them.

Unity in minority communities can make miracles happen!

## INSIDE

Dr. Marcus Jones.....	Page 3
JW Scarborough.....	Page 4
Expressions of Culture.....	Page 5-6
Coach Gipson .....	Page 7
Entrepreneur Spotlight .....	Page 15
Tribute to Sylvia Morrow.....	Page 17
Payton Family Gathering.....	Page 19-20
Dr. Horton Texas St .....	Page 22
Tribute to Dan Roque Sr.....	Page 23
Letter from Sheriff Candidate...	Page 27
And much more.....	



**REAL  
VIEWS  
REAL  
NEWS**



**SCAN ME!**



# Taking Back Our Community

By: La'Quinta Scott-Favors

Over the last few years, crime has risen in the city and the Parish of Natchitoches. Mostly involving the men and young men in our community! We are losing them to jail, drugs, gang violence, and the grave. We often hear that it takes a village, which is true, but we must be able to trust and respect one another in that village! Most residents will be in their homes minding their business but are turning their heads away from the crime. For us to see a change, we must be able to come out of our homes and come together as a whole and want the change for our community together! We find ourselves writing the generations off when the generations need genuine individuals to show them the love that they are missing, the love that they have never experienced! If Natchitoches can come to a place where we can see others for who they are and not for what they have done, there will be a major turning point. None of us are perfect, we all fall short, and God continues to give us His grace daily for things we have done openly and secretly! Everyone deserves a better life, and we must meet others where they are, not where we believe they should be, not by judging them, but by showing them love, offering ways to help, and



even going into our high crime communities outside of National Night Out and have events showing that we aren't divided by where we live!

Matthew 12:25 says, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand."


If Natchitoches doesn't come together, and we continue turning our heads and expecting law enforcement to change this town, we will all fail. It's going to take more than law enforcement to solve these homicides and stop the crime, it's going to take us as a community to step up, speak up, and get involved. Your opinion does nothing unless you put action behind your words. The change will not happen overnight, but I do believe that over time, we will take Natchitoches back!


## The Real Views


Latorria Freeman, Publisher


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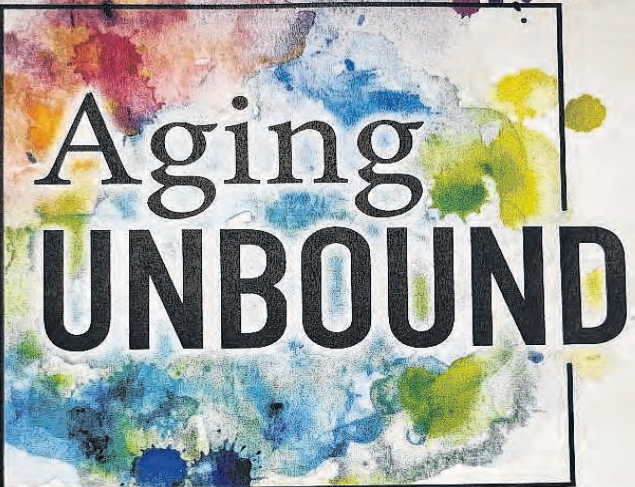
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# Aging UNBOUND


Natchitoches Parish Council On Aging Will Be Celebrating Older American's Day On Thursday, May 18, 2023, Beginning At 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. This Exciting Event Will Take Place On Our Beautiful Downtown RiverBank. For More Info Contact Mrs. Alice Barrios (Director) or Linda Turner (Activity Coordinator) 318-357-3250.

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# Interview with Dr. Marcus Jones

The First African American President  
at Northwestern State University

*NSU was established in 1884.*

**Dr. Jones, please share your family upbringing and where you're from with the readers.**

I am originally from Winnfield, La. I come from a family of 19 brothers and sisters. 20 altogether. I am number 18 out of 20. Thirteen girls and seven boys. My mother was from Castor, La, and my dad was from Natchitoches. I spent a lot of time in both Castor and Natchitoches. I have many relatives in Natchitoches. All my siblings graduated from high school. This was understood what my siblings and I were going to do. Education was something that both of my parents pushed for. They understood the transformative nature of education and wanted to ensure that we were all educated. Neither of them had the opportunity to finish beyond the 5th grade. They were both very smart individuals, but because of the need to work and help the family out, school was not a priority for them because they needed to be able to work and help the family. My parents wanted something different for their kids. My father was in the timber industry, and when she was not caring for us, my mother would occasionally clean houses for different folks. That was

her job outside of the household.

**It sounds like you had a very humble background and upbringing.**

Yes, I did.

**Can you remember a story or childhood event that you went through to explain who you are?**

I always tell a story that comes to mind: growing up, we were poor. My father scraped together enough money to buy 8 acres of land on which we would farm. So I spent my childhood growing up, as the old folks would say, on the turn row of different patches of okra, and watermelon, pulling up grass and harvesting whatever crops we raised. I remember as a kid, I must have been 12 or 13 years of age, my dad had an old chevy pickup truck, and we would harvest the crops, and he would go throughout the neighborhood and give what was left over after my mom took what she could can and preserve and save for us to eat. Anything that was left over, he would give away. I remember asking my dad why he gave the crops away when he could easily sell them. He gave them to families that oftentimes were better off than we were, and some-



Dr. Marcus Jones

times he would give them to families in the neighborhood that were made up of individuals capable of working but wouldn't work. And my dad commented that God blessed us with more than what we need and that it is his obligation to do the same for other people. It does not matter that they are capable of doing what he is doing, that's not his call; that's between them and the Lord. So that was something that I grew up seeing as an example, and that's why I tend to be a giving person as well because I saw that as an example of my parents who were poor, but they made sure that they would bless other people when they had more than what they needed.

**What's your educational history?**

I went to undergrad at Northwestern. I got my undergrad in business administration with an emphasis in finance.

I studied international economics at the University of Plymouth as part of the exchange.

I got my master's degree from Grambling and International Business and Trade.

And I finished and received my law degree from Southern University in 1999.

**What High School did you attend?**

I went to High School at Winnfield Sr High.

**Have you experienced any adversities with becoming the first African American president at NSU?**

That's a loaded question, but yes, I faced many adversities, but it is one of those things that when you, by the way, I have been at the institution for 25 years. When you have been at the institution for as long as I have been and grew up in Natchitoches, Winnfield, and Castor, you don't necessarily see it as adversity because you have dealt with it for so long that you learn to navigate the system. It becomes adversity when you're an outsider coming into something unfamiliar, and because I am so accustomed to navigating the system, I never saw it as adversity. I just saw it as a part of a system that my parents equipped me to learn to deal with and navigate as a means of survival. And I am talking about professional survival and physical survival. That's why I say it's a loaded question because it's not necessarily a situation where it is adversity. I knew how the system was designed and was taught how to navigate it at a very early age. **Continued Page 9**

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## Who is Taking Care of the American People?

“NOT THE REPUBLICANS!”

**By: James W. Scarborough**

President, Natchitoches Parish  
Voter's and Civic League, Inc.

Look at what President Biden, Vice President Harris, the Democratic Party, and the Independent Party are doing!

1. Rescue Act- Building cities and towns- 17.2 Million Dollars- for more information, contact Mayor Ronnie Williams
2. Infrastructure- Roads- Bridges- Airports, etc.
3. Affordable Health Care- Expansion of Health Care to reach more Americans.
4. Abortion- Help- Aid and Education
5. Veterans- Health Care- Jobs- Assistance
6. COVID-19- Shots- Research and Education
7. Federal Black Judges- Appointments
8. Democracy- Fighting to Keep Americans FREE
9. Protecting our U.S. Constitution and our Justice Department



10. Supreme Court Judge- First Black Female Appointment in 237 Years
11. Inflation Reduction Act Investment \$750 Billion for Americans
12. Jobs- Record on Job Employment and Job Creation
13. Protecting our Country from our Enemies
14. First Black Female Vice President of the United States
15. Climate Control
16. Helping College Students to pay off their college debts.
17. U.S. Deficit is projected to fall by more than \$1.5 trillion this year after falling by more than \$350 Billion last year.

18. President Biden continues to fight to fund ALL LAW enforcement to protect the American people.

I urge you to become a Registered Voter. If you are not registered as a Democrat or Independent, please become educated on all issues, and ask questions to understand most of all. From the Natchitoches Parish Voter's and Civic League, Inc. we encourage you to join the Voter's League for only \$10.00 a year.

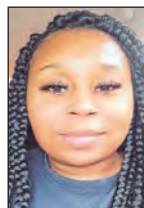
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## Words from the Vice President of Jackson Square Bailey Heights Improvement Association (JSBHIA)

**By: Maria Mangum**

*Jim Rohn once stated, "The challenge of leadership is to be strong, but not rude; to be kind, not weak; to be humble, not timid."*

My name is Maria Mangum, and I am the Vice President of Jackson Square Bailey Heights Improvement Association, also known as JSBHIA. We are a nonprofit organization trying to expand rapidly with members and services, helping those in the community feel safe again. We participate in community clean-ups with our main target as the Jackson Square/ Bailey Heights community, and we help all over Natchitoches when needed. Our president is Councilman Chris Petite. He orchestrates the community



cleanups and informs us when we will be "lending a hand" inside the community as a group.

When joining JSBHIA, my motivation has always been to help others. Seeing people laugh and smile motivates me to continue to do the work to help others. That lets me know that I'm doing something good and makes me unforgettable for my efforts. So, when a person(s) sees me again, they can remember and acknowledge my goodwill in the community.

In closing, I am kind-hearted and like seeing others win and succeed. My leadership role and qualities allow me to be patient and remain humble.

If anyone has any questions about joining JSBHIA or would like to contact me, my email is maria\_joy247@yahoo.com and my phone number is 318-471-8105.

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# “Expressions of a Culture”

Hosted By: Betty Sawyer-Smith, Council Woman At Large & Maria Mangum, VP, Jackson Square Bailey Heights Improvement Association  
Featuring Grand Marshall Alex Washington, Jr., Esq.





# “Expressions of a Culture”

Hosted By: Betty Sawyer-Smith, Council Woman At Large & Maria Mangum, VP, Jackson Square Bailey Heights Improvement Association  
Featuring Grand Marshall Alex Washington, Jr., Esq.



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## PHOTOGRAPHY

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*Thank you, Coach Gipson, for your hard work and dedication to our community. We salute you and wish you luck on your future endeavors!*

## Men's Basketball -- Gipson Resigns to Take Austin Peay Head Coaching Job

NATCHITOCHES – After engineering a 13-win turnaround for the Northwestern State men's basketball team, head coach Corey Gipson has resigned his position to accept the head coaching position at Austin Peay.

Gipson will be introduced as the Governors' new coach Tuesday.

In his lone season at Northwestern State, Gipson led the Demons to their most wins in a single season in a decade and their most Southland Conference wins in a season since 2014-15. Gipson took Northwestern State to its first Southland Conference Tournament championship game since 2013 and the Demons' second-place finish in the SLC regular season was its best since the 2012-13 season.

"Corey Gipson did a tremendous job during his time here at Northwestern State," NSU Director of Athletics Kevin Bostian said. "From the hours of

off-the-court community service to the on-court product, his program was deeply tied to the university and the city of Natchitoches. Together, they brought national recognition to Northwestern State while succeeding in the game of basketball and outside of it. While it is difficult to lose good coaches, Austin Peay's interest speaks highly of the work Corey and his staff did during their time here."

Under Gipson, Northwestern State collected its first regular-season victory against an Associated Press Top 25 team, defeating then-No. 15 TCU, 64-63, in Fort Worth, Texas, on Nov. 14. Northwestern State's 8-2 start to the season was the best 10-game mark for the program since moving to the Division I level in the 1976-77 season and its best since the 1952-53 season.

In the past week, Gipson has been named a finalist for the Ben Jobe Award, honoring the nation's top



Photo: Corey Gipson led Northwestern State to a 13-win turnaround in his lone season at the helm of the Demon program. Credit: Chris Reich/NSU Photographic Services

Division I minority coach, the Hugh Durham Award for the nation's top mid-major coach and the Joe B. Hall Award, which honors the top first-time head coach in Division I.

An Austin Peay alumnus, Gipson helped tutor the Southland Conference Player and Newcomer of the Year DeMarcus Sharp, who is a finalist for the Lou Henson Player of the Year that is given to the nation's

top mid-major player.

"The year-to-year improvement shown by coach Gipson and his program elevated the perception of our program," Bostian said. "I wish he, April, and their family all the best in the immediate and more distant future and thank them for what they did for Northwestern State and the Natchitoches community."

A national search for Gipson's replacement has begun.



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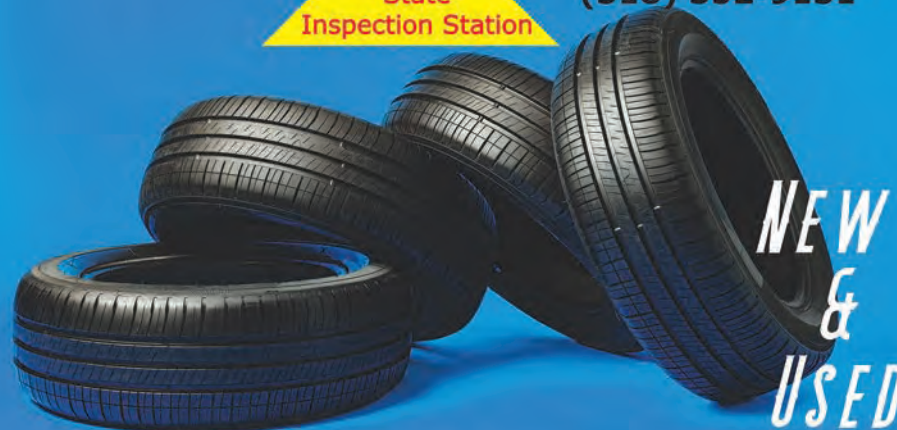


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# Forgiveness is Essential: Set Yourself Free

**By: Shelia R. Pierre**

We will all experience heartbreak and pain, but we don't have to live in that prison forever. Will you allow someone else to interfere with your future? Can someone bring a halt to your happiness? Can others cause you to be locked up emotionally? If you answer yes, this sounds like someone with immense power. Nobody should have that much control over another person's life. Forgiveness is an option to consider when you want to escape anguish.



## Let's Talk About Forgiveness!

This word can mean different things to each of us. An online source, "Mayoclinic.org" defines the word as "an intentional decision to let go of resentment and anger." Let's look at an example that can be easier to reconcile. Carlos decided to steal one hundred dollars from his sister's purse. She has children, and she has bills to pay. How could someone (not just anyone, but her brother) steal from her? And, despite his wrong decision, she must forgive him? In Matthew 6:14-15 KJV, the scripture says, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But, if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." We are human and wrestle with flesh, but according to the Bible, we must forgive. God forgives us daily. Of course, the process is not an overnight fix, but if we pray and ask God to soften our hearts, He will.

While doing some research, I found these seven steps from Thrive Works.

1. We must acknowledge that we are hurt when it happened, who did it, and why.
2. We must consider/think about how the pain affected us and how it may affect the decision to forgive.
3. We must Accept what happened because we can't change it. Here is where we think long and hard if we should forgive or not.
4. We must Determine if the process will begin or end.
5. We may work on Repairing what

happened (kindness, gestures, gifts), but that doesn't always mean restoring.

6. We need to learn what forgiveness means.

7. Forgive verbally or silently; move on.

## The Misunderstanding

There is so much confusion or unwillingness to understand what forgiveness truly means. This fact may be why people hold on to the pain for years. The offender is not "giving a pass or let off the hook." We do not have to reconnect, trust or receive apologies from offenders. Once we realize forgiveness is not for the other person, but to set ourselves free, choosing to release "it" would not be such a struggle. Freedom to live outside the prison walls is a choice the offended makes.

## Blessings Blockers

When we choose not to forgive, the offenders win. They steal our joy, peace, hopes, dreams, and more from our lives. Do you want to know how? Holding on to the pain only deepens the bitterness and resentment. This emotional state may affect how we engage with people around us. We can miss our blessings because we are not ready spiritually or emotionally. Family dynamics, finances, goals, and other tasks can suffer tremendously. We cannot live up to our full potential if we carry so much baggage. This stuff weighs us down. That is the reason why I titled this section "Blessings Blockers."

## Let's Get Our Forgiveness On & Be Free

We will always feel pain, intentional and unintentional, but how we choose to get through it is totally up to us. Burdens are lifted when we let go of bitterness, grudges, and anger. When we know who our Father is, we have access to everything we need to overcome. A whole new world of relentless possibilities and countless opportunities will be open to us when we welcome healing into our lives. Gospel singers Mary Mary's song says, "Take these shackles off my feet so I can dance!" Imagine that kind of freedom—nothing holding us down—free to dance, live, laugh, love, create, and receive everything God has for us. Forgiveness is essential to have a satisfying, fulfilling, and rewarding life.

## U N I T Y

**Tristen Jefferson, Junior Council President**

Unity is a celebration of individuality. It is a deep appreciation and respect for the unique gifts and talents in all of us. The journey of unity creates one voice that speaks to harmony and fellowship. It speaks to individuals coming together with a mission to rise as one.



Unity is essential for social, economic, and political stability. When united, individuals are more likely to work together to achieve common goals and resolve conflicts peacefully. "Get To Know the People in Your Community!" Getting to know your neighbors goes a long way when recognizing where there

is a suspicious person in the area.

Unity helps to build trust and confidence among individuals and groups. When individuals are united, they are more likely to trust each other, which leads to increased cooperation and collaboration. Unity helps to build a culture of trust and confidence, which is essential for the stability and success of any community.

## Did You Know?

**The First African American Lifeguards of Lee Street Swimming Pool**



**LEE STREET LIFEGUARDS** - Children using the Lee Street Swimming Pool are supervised by five trained lifeguards. H. J. Williams, standing left, is the pool manager, and J. D. Garrett is the assistant manager. Kneeling are, left to right, Lawrence Batiste Jr., Charles L. Jackson, and Richard Queen.

**H.J. Williams, J.D. Garrett, Lawrence Batiste Jr., Charles L. Jackson, and Richard Queen**



# Continued from Page 3 Interview with Dr. Jones

## Who or what motivates you?

I would default back to my parents. My parents and Mr. Ben D. Johnson are whom I would definitely say were motivating factors and motivating individuals in my life. My parents, of course, because they didn't have the opportunity to go to or complete high school, let alone go to college, but they still achieved. To be able to have and raise a family of 20 kids yet still be able to acquire property. My dad, who worked at a lumber mill, was not making much money. That is the epitome of what it means to persevere and the epitome of what it means to achieve. So, you look at the adversities that they faced, and yet they were able to provide more than what we needed and ensure that all of us had a leg up in the sense that we could all graduate high school. Most of my siblings did well in high school and got scholarships to go to college. And most of us graduated college. So, to have that as part of my legacy is inspiring to just about anyone dealing with adversities, especially African Americans. So, my

parents definitely inspired me. And then, I had the ability to work as a young attorney under Mr. Ben Johnson. There is a link between my parents and Mr. Johnson in that he started his business in Winnfield with just a few dollars, and hearing that story and seeing a man who was a millionaire but an unassuming millionaire who didn't put on airs. He was adamant about giving back to the community and providing opportunities for young African Americans to succeed. And telling his story and seeing his story lived out, he definitely influenced how I developed as an African American and professional.

## Any advice on building relationships with people of different cultures and backgrounds?

Our obligation and my obligation and I have been asked questions about the importance of being the first African American to head up an institution that has existed since 1884 and never had anyone that looked like me as a president. A young African American student interviewed me, and he asked

me why that was important for African Americans. I told him it is more important for the non-blacks than blacks. The reason is often not to diminish this as important for African Americans. I think sometimes we are not seen in a capacity that illustrates that we are capable of achieving, directing, and leading. So sometimes, it's even more important for non-blacks to see us in positions where we are showing our excellence, and it does more to keep the door open for others to come behind us. So yes, young African Americans need to see us in positions of authority. Still, it is equally important for non-African Americans to see us in that capacity because of the narrative that we have been sold and taught over the years through the media. So, it helps to change some of those preconceived notions about our capabilities. So, I think that the advice and what I think is important about seeing African Americans in leadership positions is that it gives other people who are non-African Americans the ability to see us and see us excel at some of the same jobs



that we have not necessarily had access to in the past.

## Do you have any motivational quotes or words of encouragement for our readers?


I would say this, where you start should not dictate where you end up. When you look at my family strictly on paper, the adversity we dealt with as a family, and the cards that were dealt to us, you look at where my siblings ended up. They started

out definitely, if you look at it on paper, not where they probably should have ended up. So, because you start with a hand of cards that may not be the best, that does not necessarily become a determining factor on how you will end up.

You can still achieve your goals!

You can still do well!

Sometimes you just have to fight a little bit harder.



**Your opinion matters**

**If you want to comment or write about any issue of interest or something that appeared in The Real Views, please write to us at PO Box 1082 Natchitoches, La 71458. We look forward to hearing from you and will print your responses depending on available space.**

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# Dear Church: WE ARE MISSING IT! IT'S TIME to REPENT and RISE!

By: Evangelist Nissa Manry Fulton

Amazing GRACE, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like ME! There was a time when it was safe to walk in a church. The churches in 2023 vs. the churches back in the day are definitely not one and the same. Today's church is a NEW breed. It seems as if you are walking into gangs at times. There are cliques, circles, private associations, and organizations all within the church where it seems safer outside the church vs. inside the organized church walls. Many will say things like, "we are the church," and "you're focused too much on the building vs. what the church is." However, in the above statement, I am referring directly to the corporate gatherings that occur when two or more are gathered, which mostly happens within the four walls of a building. The Bible tells us not to forsake the assembly (Hebrews 10:25 ESV). In the exact biblical reference, it refers to the corporate fellowship where people come together, assemble, and conduct service. We forget that they had church in buildings back in the days of Paul, Timothy, Peter, and Jesus, so it is time to cut the religious foolishness and act like we can understand what the church is and where the church gathers. If your church looks like a park gathering, a home gathering, etc., it is still corporate fellowship, aka an assembling of brethren, so no church is exempt from this plea to stop being a den of sin and start back to being a place of Word, Worship, and true Fellowship. It's time to repent and turn back to our first love Church!

When I ride around any city I am in, my heart aches and cries at times at how there is a church on EVERY corner, like the liquor stores. Sometimes, you can't even tell the difference between a church and a den of sin. It bleeds my heart even more how the church can be sitting right next to a liquor store, a crack house, a whore house, a stripper's den, etc., and those places have no conviction to cease from their sin and come into the church gathering because no one is leaving the four walls and reaching out to them about Jesus. Most of the ones in the church are saved on Sunday but come Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday; they are first-in-line customers at the crack house, the whore house, the stripper's den, or the liquor store. They pay more money and give more honor and respect to their places of sinful recreation than giving honor and respect to the house of God they worship at on Sunday. Sometimes on Sunday, those in attendance are so full of "spirits" that they really are NOT worshipping; they are dancing while under the influence of substances. Can we keep it real? It's a heartbreaking, hard truth, but God loves us so much, He corrects those He loves, and He wants the church to repent, so He'll send forth His Word to get us to repent and turn back to Him so that we can be what the church is designed to be.

Judgment starts in the house of GOD (1 Peter 4:17)! We need to remember the seven churches of Asia Minor in Revelation 2 and realize that the Word for them is the Word for us today because we are the church, and again judgment starts in the HOUSE of GOD. For the sake of keeping your attention, I won't go deep into the churches and their breakdowns, history, and culture, but what I will say is that all SEVEN of these churches were once seen as having a HOLY FEAR towards God, a real love for God, a

real honor, reverence and respect for the church, yet 6 of them were bewitched and falling away to where they had to receive a hard word of Repent and WOE less they experience destruction! We are at a place of hearing the Lord say, "REPENT & WOE"! This is a Word from the Lord this season to the church, "REPENT & WOE"! Repentance is daily to those who say, Lord, so He doesn't have to, or shouldn't have to remind us individually on a daily basis to repent, but the church as a whole, when you get that "REPENT & WOE"; that means pay attention, listen up, hear these words because if you don't, comes destruction. Is this a "coming against the church?" No, indeed not; I serve in a house of God weekly. I am not "anti-church." However, I am very aware of the judgment that is flooding the house of God right NOW because of the sin allowed in and undealt with. A sinner should not feel comfortable coming into the church and leaving the same way they came in. A sinner is supposed to be drawn in so that by the time you say the final AMEN, they feel the need, desire, and draw to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18). A sinner should be coming in and by the time they leave, they should be feeling like a saint because they've received such truth they chose to put off the old man, pick up the new man, and now follow Jesus. A sinner should not feel like they are just visiting their people's house, having a family reunion, taking a little communion snack, breaking bread with their peeps, and with no conviction carrying on about their sinful life. Romans 6:15, when asked, "What then? Should we continue in sin because we are no longer under the law but under grace? Says GOD FORBID. So we shouldn't feel comfortable sitting in church on Sunday living in sin, and the sinners coming in the house to accept the invitation to receive Jesus as Lord shouldn't feel comfortable coming in and leaving the same saying they are saved solely because they paid the church a visit. When coming into a corporate gathering, there should be a HEAVY atmosphere of reconciliation back to God through Jesus because we should be in the posture of repentance when we come into the presence of God. If there is no presence in the place you choose to corporately fellowship, it's time to go where the presence of God resides.

The Word of God clearly says, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10) It is time to be like Christ and leave the religious setting, go into the fields, and seek and save the lost. The lost shouldn't be seeking and trying to save us; that's totally the opposite of what salvation looks like. I've been out in these streets for years, and I've heard the sinner spit more Words than the saint. I've heard the sinner gives the religious more wisdom than the religious know for themselves. I've heard stories of the sinner doing more good than the saint. I've witnessed the sinner have more strength and faith in their belief than the saint. I mean, it's crazy out here in these streets, but it's real. The church is supposed to be equipped to go out in the streets and preach the gospel, but the equipping of saints is not where it should be, and the world is devouring them because the church is in sinner mode. The church is in a fallen state and needs to repent and turn back to its first love so that it can move and operate and function as the true church should.



**Church, will you wake up from your sleep and repent? Church will you stop looking like the walking dead and arise in Christ and repent and be the light in a dark world?**

This article is more of a letter to the church than an article, so I'll say, **Dear Church, those with ears, let them hear what the Spirit of God is saying.**

Church, what has so EASILY distracted you from your initial focus and love for me where you've fallen away from your first love? Today's Prophetic Word for the church from the Lord, permission by the Lord to release, comes from Revelations 2 and 3. To the church whose practices going on within the church who at one time couldn't even bear with those who are evil, who tested those who said they were apostles and are not, finding them to be false. Who was enduring and waiting patiently, not growing weary in waiting, but have fallen away from the FIRST LOVE, REPENT and Turn back to your first love before I remove my lampstand from you less you repent. To the church whose allowed teachings of Balaam, who taught Balak how to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, leading them to eat food sacrificed to idols and fall into sexual immorality, and you also have some who hold the teaching of Nicolaitans, it's time to repent before WAR comes against them with the sword of HIS MOUTH. To the church who has accepted and entertained Jezebel, knowing she is a false prophet, knowing she caused people to practice sexual immorality and eat food sacrificed to idols, if you don't repent, not only will she be thrown into a sickbed, everybody that commits adultery with her will be thrown into great tribulation. ALL churches will know who God is, the God that searches mind and heart and will judge according to works.

To the church with the reputation of being alive yet dead, WAKE UP! You need to strengthen what remains and is about to die, for your works are found incomplete in the sight of GOD! You need to remember when you received this Word and Repent. To the church that is found neither hot nor cold, the lukewarm church, "LESS YOU REPENT, I WILL SPIT YOU OUT MY MOUTH!" You say you say, you say,

you say, you say, and I say you have NOTHING. And to the church who has seen tribulation and poverty and has been slandered, you're about to go through things such as imprisonment. However, if you stand the test of faith for ten days, you will see the crown of life. This imprisonment isn't from anything you've done wrong. The Word is clear that the devil will be throwing you into prison, so stand the test of faith during these ten days of tribulation, and you WILL receive the crown of life.

"This only covers 6 of 7 churches, some will say, I thought there were seven"! Well, in alignment with the Word that tells us few will enter (Matthew 7:13-14), ONE of the SEVEN churches (Church of Philadelphia) was not given a Word of Repent because it was not found in error, it was found as the true church, a spotless bride, ready for the return of the groom, so to that church that has not fallen into any of the above and remember GOD judges the heart and mind, so even if you're impersonating, it will be exposed. To this church, "you have an OPEN door before you right now. A door that no man can shut. Although you are found weak at times, the enemy will be brought to bow down at your feet. You will be kept from the hour of trial that is coming on the entire world to try those who dwell on the earth. Hold fast because I am coming soon. Let no man seize your crown, for the one who conquers will be made a pillar in the temple of my GOD", says the Lord.

He who has an ear, let Him hear what the Spirit of God is saying!

My LAST request to the church would be, DEAR CHURCH, will you please LEAVE the comfort of the building and go out and PREACH the gospel of Jesus Christ? If you repent and turn back to your first love, you will begin to experience the draw to do as Jesus did and seek and save the lost. Natchitoches needs it. Baton Rouge needs it. New Orleans needs it. Shreveport needs it. Many needs it. Campti needs it. Coushatta needs it.... The entire world needs it. However, they won't get it unless we obey the Lord's instruction and go out! The harvest is plenty, but laborers are few. Will you die to yourself and become a laborer for the kingdom of God?

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# Learning Who's Who at The Flavor of Louisiana Event





# Learning Who's Who at The Flavor of Louisiana Event





# Put Down the Guns, and Let's Stop the Violence

**By: Onterio Pier**

Growing up in Natchitoches as a young black child with young parents and limited resources, working with what they had, made life rough. My family always filled my life with love, guidance, peace, protection, and good family values, not violence or death. Coming from the north side to the south, east and west side of Natchitoches, I was brought up by an incredible family with real stand-up people who led by example, proving that even with little opportunity and the odds against us, we can still succeed in this little town. Times are different now. Some of us dream of being stable and able to provide for our families. The good thing is we have many more resources and opportunities to become successful than our parents had, and the ball (future) is in our hands now. Depending on how we handle the chances given to us will dictate our future. The time is now! Take advantage of your opportunity. Put down the guns and stop the violence. As black men, the system was already

set up to go against us, making it even harder for us to live a perfect life. And we all know a perfect life is impossible because nobody is perfect except God. The statistics already placed us at the bottom of the chain.

We can make a conscious decision to change this narrative. We are the present, and our kids and younger siblings coming up under us are the future. We must make a change and stand up for something or continue falling for anything leading us to the jailhouse or the grave. The picture is bigger and better than what has been painted and shared about us for years. We must be the new image and come together to show the world what we can achieve and that blacks can succeed instead of spilling blood. If we take all the negative energy and put it in a positive pot, we can all eat and become rich. Sign up for the military if you are serious about shooting guns. They need soldiers and will pay you for it while you learn a skill that will advance you and your future. If you want to have a voice about the changes needed, be the change. Start by looking in the mirror to see where it begins with you.

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\*NSU 2013 SLC TOURNAMENT CHAMPS  
\*2013 NCAA ROUND OF 64

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## RECIPES FROM *Betty Queen's Kitchen*

### CAKE MIX COOKIES

#### What You'll Need:

Any flavor box of cake mix  
2 eggs  
1/2 cup of vegetable oil

#### Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350° F  
Mix the cake mix, eggs, and vegetable oil in a large mixing bowl with a spatula. You can also use a mixer on low speed to blend the ingredients.  
Place 2 tablespoons of cookie dough onto a pan 2 inches apart  
Bake for 10-15 minutes or until golden brown  
Allow cookies to cool for 3-4 minutes



## Debra Holmes Walls AKA Independent Lady

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Entergy's Storm Costs on Bills Too High

While Entergy Corp. recently reported a \$1.1 billion profit for 2022, their customers in Louisiana saw increases in their utility bills throughout the year. Those increases will continue for up to 15 years. They are attributed to storm restoration charges. Unfortunately, in Louisiana, all of the costs spent restoring areas damaged by natural disasters are passed on to the customers by the utility companies.

Climate change has caused significant changes in the weather traditionally experienced in Louisiana. For example, South Louisiana was hit particularly hard by multiple hurricanes - Laura, Delta, Zeta and Ida - during just a two-year period, 2020 and 2021.

Entergy came before the Louisiana Public Service Commission twice in 2022, requesting the ability to recoup more than \$5 billion in restoration expenses. I voted against both increases. They resulted in an additional \$13 for 1250 kilowatt-hours of usage per month by the customers. For higher usage the increase is more. I questioned whether those expenses had to be borne entirely by the customers or if the utility could be made to share responsibility.

Entergy has also request-

ed that customers bear an additional \$5 billion in expenses to improve the resiliency of its infrastructure. Before any further discussion is had, I have asked the company and LPSC staff to determine where that money will be spent and what parishes will be served.

The recent increases and those requested apply across the board throughout Louisiana. This is true even though damage to Entergy's grid from the 2020-2021 storms occurred primarily in the southern part of the state. North Louisiana customers equally bear the cost of extensive damage in other parts of the state. I have asked LPSC staff if the cost of storm restoration can be based in part on where actual damage occurred and that analysis is underway.

With climate change a reality in our world, damaging storms will continue to wreak havoc on the electrical grid across Louisiana. It is time for utility regulators, company officials, and customers to devise a more durable, equitable, and affordable way to distribute electricity in our state.

**Foster Campbell**

Louisiana Public Service Commissioner District 5 (North Louisiana)

## Women's Basketball -- Northwestern State's Parramore earns first-team all-conference selection

**NATCHITOCHES** — A dynamic scorer with a tough-as-nails ability to get to the rim that can also light it up from beyond the arc makes Candice Parramore a First-Team All-Southland Conference player, the league office announced on Friday.

Parramore backed up her Newcomer of the Year honor from a season ago with an equally as impressive 2022-23 campaign for Northwestern State, taking her performance up a notch during conference play.

The Dallas, Texas, native averaged 16.4 points per game during league games, reaching double figures in 13 of the 14 conference games in which she played this year. She had five different 20-point outings and ended the season with a career-best 12 straight games scoring 10 or more points.

Parramore had consecutive 20-point games for the third time in her career in a pair of NSU home wins against HCU and Lamar. She averaged 22.0 points, 4.0 rebounds, 2.0 steals and 1.5 assists that week making her an easy choice for SLC Player of the Week honors.

On consecutive Saturday's during conference play, Parramore set and matched her career-high scoring mark of 26 points against Texas A&M-Commerce and then against New Orleans, both NSU wins.

Her ability to get to the rim and often times subsequently the free throw line was put on full display in both of those performances. Parramore had her two highest single game free throw totals of career making 13-of-15 against Commerce and 11-of-14 against UNO. She scored 15 points alone in the third quarter of the game against the Privateers.

She is the best free throw shooter by percentage of any player with more than 50 attempts in conference action with an .824 mark. For the year Parramore has



Photo: Candice Parramore (white-15) averaged 16.4 points per game during league play to earn a spot on the all-Southland first-team.

Photo credit: Chris Reich, NSU Photographic Services



Graphic credit: Brad Welborn, NSU Asst. Sports Information Director

made a total of 98 free throws and is just two makes shy of being the first player in nearly 30 years to make 100 or more free throws in consecutive seasons. Angela Simpson did it in three straight seasons from 1992-95.

Of the top-rated scorers in conference play she has the highest free-throw percentage and ranks in the top 10 in 3-pointers made per game at 1.9.

She led the Demons in scoring 13 different times this season and had 18 double-digit efforts in 25 total games played.

Parramore surpassed the 1,000 career point milestone this season, the 28th player to do so while wearing an NSU jersey,

after back-to-back 300-point seasons for the Demons. In two seasons at NSU, Parramore scored over 700 points, averaged 13.7 per game, has the fourth best single-season free throw mark (.892) and will have the best career free throw percentage (.847) in program history.

Also picked as a preseason first-team player, Parramore is the first NSU women's basketball player to earn first-team honors since Beatrice Attura following the 2016-17 season. She is also the first player for the NSU women to earn consecutive all-conference honors since Janelle Perez picked up two straight first-team selections from 2014-16.





# BLACK-OWNED BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

## Human Care Products FOR THE PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE

By: Septembria Martin

Human Care Products, LLC was founded on June 22, 2020, during the height of the Pandemic. We have been growing hair consistently since that date. God has blessed us with a product that, when used daily, each customer will see hair growth. (Results may vary)

This awesome product is called More Hair Liquid Gold. As the name says, it will give you more hair, and it is definitely liquid gold.

Made with all-natural ingredients, over 16, aimed to grow and add nutrients to your hair and scalp. Liquid Gold works for all people, hair textures, and ethnicities between the ages of 4 months and older.

Ingredients include, but are not limited to, Lavender, Ginger, Eucalyptus,



Peppermint, Olive Oil, Coconut Oil, Niaouli, May Chang, etc.

We also offer other products aimed to grow, cleanse, and promote even more hair growth along

your hair growth journey.

When used daily, all customers have claimed to see hair growth within 14 days of daily use.

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Septembria Martin  
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# Words from the Publisher, Latorria Freeman

The Real Views is back!

New Look! New Publisher! New Content! New Tone!

We are here to provide a platform for our community to have a voice. This platform is crucial to the community to allow us, as minorities, to be heard. This platform enables us as a people to create the narrative of our community. This platform allows our community to showcase our talents and to empower and inspire the people of our community to speak up and share our experiences with the world. We can share knowledge, tips,

and events within the community, and The Real Views is a platform created by the people for the people. We are here to allow our community to bridge the gap with elected and community leaders, officials, and people of other cultures. The Real Views is dedicated to sharing the responsibility of creating a safe space for our people to share their experiences and life stories, along with a place to voice your concerns and or grievances. In closing, a community with a voice shall be heard. So, we ask that you speak up and let your voice be heard!



## Ben Johnson Educational Center Expungement Initiative Event

The Ben Johnson Educational Center (BDJ) Center hosted a free record expungement initiative in partnership with Southern University Law Center (SULC) for all Natchitoches, Winn, and Sabine parishes residents. The arrest/conviction for possible expungement could have taken place anywhere in the state of Louisiana. The event occurred on Tuesday, March 7th.

This expungement initiative was an intake of information event, meaning attorneys from SULC met with individuals to get their records expunged, discussed the expungement process, and accepted individuals' documentation.

After the event, the attorneys will determine if the individual is eligible for expungement in Loui-



siana, given their gathered information. They will respond by letter to the individual telling them if they qualify. If qualified, the individual will become a client of SULC, where SULC will prepare, file, and pay their expungement fees. Remember there is a limit to the number of individuals that will be taken on as clients by SULC and have their expungement paid for, typically \$550-600.

The SULC requested

the following documents: Driver's License/State ID, Certified copy of minutes, Certified copy of bill of information, and your Background Check. Remember that if you did not provide all the documents during the event, the documentation could still be mailed but will extend the expungement process.

Please get in touch with the BDJ Center for any additional information or questions.



If you want to comment or write about any interests, issues, or something that appeared in The Real Views, please write to us at P.O. Box 1082 Natchitoches, La 71458. We look forward to hearing from you and will print responses depending on available space.

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# Tribute to Councilwoman Sylvia Marie Morrow

Ms. Sylvia Marie Morrow was the first woman and the first Black woman to be elected to the Natchitoches City Council. She served as councilwoman for 20 years. Sylvia Marie Morrow was a pioneer for The City of Natchitoches and considered herself a voice for the people.

Sylvia Marie Morrow volunteered in the community of Natchitoches and was passionate about the success of this community.

She was dedicated to her district and helped in numerous efforts for the betterment of the community.

She was not only named one of the

Women of Excellence, but she also received countless awards for her service, including the Natchitoches Black Heritage Committee, Community Service Award, National Council Women, Model of Excellence Award, National Education Association of Teachers and Paraprofessionals Forum and The Martin Luther King Commission.

One of Sylvia Morrow's visions for the community was to form a citizen's advisory committee to host forums with the mayor, cultural groups, civic groups, and business groups to work together for a better community. By forming this committee, she felt we would not have

as much division among the elected officials. Hosting forums and bringing others out in the community could create unity and harmony with the mayor and city officials.

The Real Views spoke with her sister, Sharon Morrow, who said, "My sister Sylvia Morrow was a community advocate. All of her family very much miss her."

We also spoke with one of her dearest friends, Edward Ward, nicknamed Tootie Boy, and Ms. Morrow was nicknamed Tootie girl. He shared that Ms. Morrow was a dedicated servant with a strong presence in Natchitoches and beyond. And that she is truly missed!





# Home Buyers Tips from Your Community Bankers at BOM!

## Save

- Down payment
- Closing cost

## Review Credit Score

- Stay current on bills (no late payments)
- No major purchases
- Pay down credit card debt to below 50% of your limit, but don't cancel any credit cards
- Higher credit score = lower interest rate = lower payments
- Dispute any inaccurate information
- Get a free copy of your credit report at [www.AnnualCreditReport.com](http://www.AnnualCreditReport.com)

• BOM offers a pre-approved Credit Builder Loan that can help!

## Get Pre-Qualified with BOM

- Speak with a BOM Loan Officer
- Discuss payments and find the best product to fit your circumstances

## Choose a Realtor

- You and your lender will communicate with the realtor to let them know which price point you need.

## Visit Home

- Take photos and make notes!

## Make an Offer

- Discuss allowed seller contributions with your lender and realtor.
- Once your offer is accepted, the lender can proceed with your loan.

## Schedule a Home Inspection

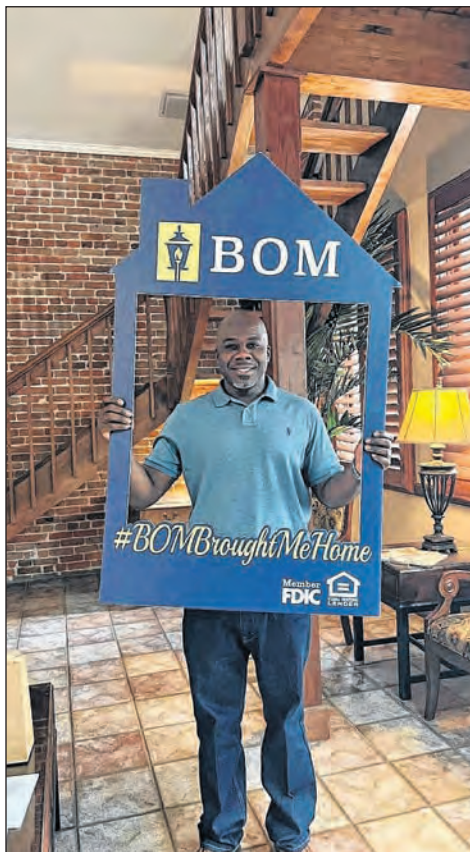
- For your protection, get a home inspection. Your realtor can recommend a home inspector.

## Final Walkthrough before Closing

- Test light switches, faucets, and toilets.

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# Strong Family Ties that Keep a Family Rooted

Pictures courtesy of The Payton Family in remembrance of Tony Payton Sr.





# Strong Family Ties that Keep a Family Rooted

Pictures courtesy of The Payton Family in remembrance of Tony Payton Sr.





# Why Natchitoches Parish NEEDS Libraries

Article Provided by:  
Natchitoches Parish Library

VOTE APRIL 29th  
EARLY VOTING  
APRIL 15th-22nd

The Library is a **cornerstone** in the educational process, providing equitable access to information, engaging opportunities and experiences, and relevant connections and community space for all residents of Natchitoches Parish. **STRONG LIBRARIES BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES** and educational growth is essential for a vital economy!

**CURRENT SITUATION:** The Library is entirely supported by an 8-mill, dedicated property tax which voters passed in 1997 and then renewed in 2007 & 2017. In 2021, the actual ad valorem received by the Library was

\$2.9M; the Library's operating budget for that year was \$2M. The Library has a Strategic Plan, available at [www.natlib.org](http://www.natlib.org), which acts as a guide for the current operating budget and future capital outlay projects.

**COUNCIL PROPOSAL:** The Natchitoches Parish Council is asking voters to rededicate half of the library's millage – approximately \$1.5M – and use it to "fix" Parish roads exclusively outside the city limits of Natchitoches. Currently, the Council has not presented any plans for these funds. The cost to overlay an existing mile of paved road is approximately \$300K. This rededication of funds would allow the Parish to overlay 5 of the 328 miles of paved roads within the Parish while crippling library services and programs permanently.

**RESULTS:** If this proposition passes, the Library will be forced to make

IF this PROPOSITION PASSES, the  
LIBRARY will be FORCED to CLOSE the  
NORTHEAST BRANCH & REDUCE HOURS,  
STAFF, SERVICES, & PROGRAMS at the  
MAIN BRANCH.

difficult decisions regarding closing branches and reducing hours, staff, services, and programs offered to ALL residents of Natchitoches Parish.

**A "YES" VOTE MEANS:**

- No future expansion (branch) in the Western or Southern parts of the Parish.
- CLOSING the Northeast Branch in Campti.

- Decreasing hours of operation at the Main Branch.
- Staff reduction.
- Discontinuing hoopla services.
- Discontinuing Wi-Fi hotspot circulation.
- Discontinuing online database access to LinkedIn Learning, Consumer Reports, Fiero Code, Ref. USA, Novelist, and Northstar Digital Literacy.

- Significantly decreasing materials purchasing.
- Reducing/eliminating Bookmobile services. No purchase of School mobile to better serve students.
- Reducing/eliminating programming for all ages, including Summer Reading performers.

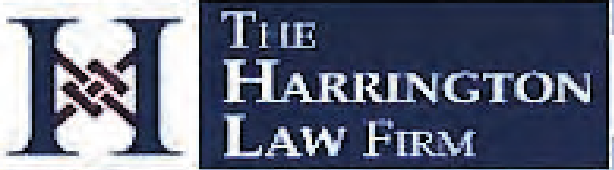
**A "NO" VOTE MEANS:**

- Expanding service in rural areas of the community by building branches in the Western & Southern parts of the Parish.
- Enhancing service to school children by purchasing a new School mobile.
- Maintaining a professional level of service at all library locations, six days out of the week.
- Increased investment in purchasing physical and digital materials and content.
- Expanding electronic resources and new technology.
- Increasing outreach services and home delivery.
- Continued year-round programming for all ages.

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# The Revitalization of Texas Street

## Advantages of Texas Street's Inclusion in the Historic District

**Provided by: Dr. Steve Horton**

Vice Chair, The Historic District Commission

On February 27, 2023, the Natchitoches City Council passed the final ordinance # 014. Ordinance to amend section 16.1-1 of the code of ordinance of The City of Natchitoches to provide for an enlarged "local Natchitoches Historic District", which section is in Chapter 16.1 of the code of ordinances, entitled Historic District, providing for advertising, further providing for severability and further providing for a repealer and effective date of the ordinance.

The historic designation means Texas Street, from the intersection of Washington Street to Breda Avenue, is now a part of the historic district. The positive effect of this change far outweighs the negative.

The Real Views spoke with Dr. Steve Horton to further understand the advantages of this designation to our community.

### • Tax Advantages on the State and Federal level

The historic designation gives tax benefits to property owners in the dis-

trict and makes the property eligible for specific grants for historic preservation. In addition, state or local designation as a historic district gives area residents a good bit of control over nearby preservation and development.

### • Refurbishing and Renovation Efforts to Preserve 50-Plus-Year-Old Homes/Businesses

The historical designation will help to preserve the cultural history of our community. This change will also help grow local businesses and open possibilities for tourism. Rehabilitating these homes and businesses will provide character to Texas Street. The historic designation provides protection and preservation of the community's character and uniqueness.

### • Enhance Future Business and Property Sales

Local Historic districts will enhance the potential of future businesses on Texas Street and recruit people to purchase properties. Historic districts preserve the neighborhood's historic character while providing many ben-

efits to the residents, businesses, and future businesses.

### • Esthetically Good Look

Historical district designation creates a better-looking community and neighborhood, which gives the community pride.

### • Affordability

Guidelines will be within reason and affordable.

The Commission will work closely with the community to apply guidelines to prevent citizens/business owners from going broke to meet guidelines.



### • Stable Community

Historic buildings and homes provide a sense of stability for the community. Therefore, this status can be beneficial in helping to save historic buildings and sites.

**The historic district designation is beneficial to our community!**

**All the above-listed reasons are BIG ADVANTAGES for minority businesses and why your business should be on Texas Street in Natchitoches, Louisiana.**

**Let's stand together and support our community!**

## Importance of Family Traditions

**By: Nikki Madison**



Family traditions, as passed down from generation to generation, often create a sense of belonging and unite families. They remind us of the importance of family values, customs, and beliefs. When reinforced through family traditions, our values and beliefs create this unity within the family units. These beliefs and practices are often passed down to our children and future generations, and they carry them on to start a family culture. Traditions create a sense of closeness between family members. They create stability and allow us to feel what it's like to belong. Passing traditions to future generations is a meaningful way to preserve our culture and

values. Creating lasting memories will set the tone for many future generations to come. Your children will benefit from this in more ways than you will know. They will feel loved and accepted. The family structure is essential.

No matter what the family may consist of this structure allows the family to create a foundation. This structure gives our future generations a starting point. This structure also enables future generations to have something to carry into the future. Family traditions remain long after we are gone. Family traditions create a sense of love between family members and, most importantly, show their dedication to providing emotional support and unconditional love to each other despite life's happenings.

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## 70 Years of Service from Mr. Daniel J. "Dan" Roque, Sr. at Roque's Garage

Hats off to Mr. Daniel J. "Dan" Roque Sr. for providing over 70 years of service to our community!

It was a pleasure to sit down with Mr. Roque to hear about some of the histories of Melrose, Louisiana, and his mechanic shop history.

Mr. Roque's dad started Roque's Garage in 1937 or 1938. After his dad's death, his brother owned the shop from 1950 to 1953. In 1953, Mr. Roque quit the 11th grade to keep his father's legacy going.

Daniel J. Roque, referred to as "Dan," is a young 88-year-old man who has worked as a mechanic and served the Natchitoches Parish community for over 70 years. He is proud to say he is 88 and loves to sit down and share history stories. He has nine children, six girls, and three boys, and he learned to become a mechanic by watching his dad. He states he has always wanted better for his children. Mr. Roque told us that he believes people are entitled to make mistakes. Like him, he had the right to make and learn from mistakes. Likewise, his children have the same right to make mistakes. He is here to

help, but they have their own choices.

Mr. Roque has fond memories of Archie Metoyer and considers him a son. Archie's grandfather was his barber, and he watched Archie and his brothers grow up around his shop. Mr. Roque did a lot of work for Archie's dad. He shared a fun fact with us that he has enjoyed drinking moonshine from time to time and shared stories about his friend Archie Metoyer's dad. He laughed and shared that anything that starts to taste too good must have a stopping point.

Mr. Roque has seen it all, from living off the land to hauling hay for a living to the most recent changes in society. In his times, when a man killed a hog, they shared that meat with the entire community to make sure everyone had food.

He still remembers times when as black men; the whites would give them tokens to spend at certain stores and would not share their currency with the black community except once a year. So, they kept their money within their community.

Mr. Roque considers himself a black man, while some consider him creole. He doesn't care what nationality he's



mixed with; he states he had nothing to do with that. Mr. Roque is just grateful to be here still and witness the changes in our community within the black community. He states that he had to do what

was needed to survive back then.

Mr. Roque has a wealth of knowledge about Melrose and some of its ancestors. He's a very humble man, and we salute you for serving our community.

## Natchitoches City Council declares March as Women's History Month and recognizes Mrs. Elnora Robertson



First Black woman to sign documents and file a lawsuit to desegregate the public schools in Natchitoches, La.

# Elect

# Michael Wilson

# Sheriff

"Our Children are our Greatest Resource"



# Scenes from NSU Alost Hall Dedication





# Autism and Asperger's Syndrome

By Herbert de Launay

Autism and Asperger's Syndrome refer to differences in how some people perceive and understand things and how they relate to others and situations. One can study this in various psychology and education classes.

The CDC says: "Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain. People with ASD often have problems with social communication and interaction and restricted or repetitive behaviors or interests. People with ASD may also have different ways of learning, moving, or paying attention. It is important to note that some people without ASD might also have some of these symptoms. But for people with ASD, these characteristics can make life very challenging.

It is referred to as a spectrum because various symptoms can be present to greater or lesser degrees. No two people are exactly alike. Similarly, no two persons with ASD will be exactly alike. So, one size only does not fit everyone. Programs, interventions, and accommodations that are useful for one person may be less useful for another.

Asperger's Syndrome is sometimes used to describe a person with symptoms like autism but without speech delays. Perhaps it could be considered a subgroup. Thousands of books and articles are written on autism and Asperger's Syndrome. This column will only

be able to touch on a few points of interest.

Many people might have autism to one extent or another. That is why it is referred to as a spectrum. It is manifested in various ways in various individuals. To understand spectrum, think of going into a paint store and looking at a book with thousands of shades of green and a hundred shades of brown.

Some people with autism may not talk at all. Others may speak forever on a topic of particular interest to them. One common problem is social interactions. Someone with autism will often feel clumsy in social situations.

People differ a lot, and it is like ASD. For example, Elon Musk, a brilliant billionaire, has said he is autistic or has Asperger's Syndrome. Some suggest Einstein was also, but, in his time, people did not know about autism or test for it. Interestingly, one of Einstein's grade school teachers wrote that Einstein would never amount to anything.

Some people are so seriously affected that they cannot go to school, or they go to school but cannot graduate. Others, like the author Temple Grandin, a favorite of mine, have autism and a Ph.D. Fortunately, she had a mother who was very supportive and who was able to find appropriate schooling for her.

"Social communication and interaction skills can be challenging for people with ASD," according to the CDC. For example, some with ASD seem to avoid eye contact. They may be listening carefully, but they have trouble listen-

ing to and looking at you at the same time.

They have difficulty doing two things simultaneously, looking and listening. Ordinary people, sometimes called neurotypical, learn to listen and look simultaneously. However, some with ASD find that difficult and thus miss out on body language cues.

Several articles and sites say a medical diagnosis is required. I do not necessarily agree. A medical diagnosis might be expensive. Finding a qualified professional might take time. A hundred years ago, no one was diagnosed with ASD. People just did the best they could. Depending on their ability, people lived and worked as best they could. Some, like Einstein, struggled at first but did very well once they found their niche, their place in life. Many worked with their hands or became electricians or carpenters. Many who might have a touch of autism can do very well in certain fields. Some are very good with computers.

A medical diagnosis is often required for disability payments or special assistance in a school setting. However, you can now read up on it, learn more, and learn what accommodations are helpful for you or your family member. We can learn to appreciate and accept our differences. I can smile at how I always want the same thing for breakfast.

Autism is often genetic. It involves the way the brain is wired. So, it cannot be cured by medicine or therapy, although medication or therapy can be helpful in some cases. Also, the person is doing the best they can. It does

no good to accuse them of being lazy or obstinate when they are doing the best they can in the situation. Perhaps some adaptations may be needed to accommodate them.

As I read and studied more about these things in recent years, I realized that I have a little Asperger's Syndrome or autism. Of course, few people knew about such things years ago, so it was never diagnosed. But, looking back, I see signs. I was good in math and science but clumsy in sports and could not dance. As a child, my handwriting was terrible. Nowadays, they would call that dysgraphia and give the child a notebook computer or I-pad to type on. I was good at science but had trouble working with a group for the science lab class.

In years past, they would call such people eccentric. They might say they were stuck in their ways because they liked routine. They did not understand problems with sensory overload, where a person cannot handle a lot of noise or several things simultaneously. Sometimes such children are accused of having a temper tantrum when their mental systems are overwhelmed, and they have a meltdown. One solution is to learn to be more accepting of ourselves and others. We learn to accept our differences and identify the situations in which we can best function.

I am grateful that I have had several teachers, friends, and counselors who seemed to intuitively know how to help me, even though I had no formal diagnosis.

## Extravagant Calendar Feast held by The Asbury United Methodist Church



The Asbury United Methodist Church put on an extravagant feast activity titled "Calendar Feast." A meal was prepared and catered to represent each month of the year. Tables were dressed and decorated to depict their month. Patrons were invited at \$10 each to taste each food item of their choice from each table.



# Cane River Film Festival

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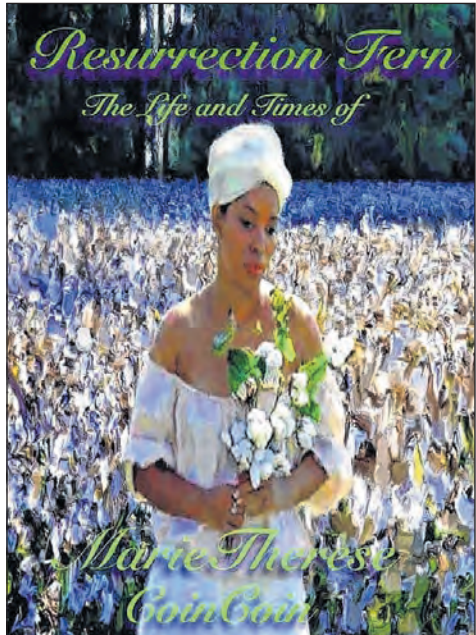
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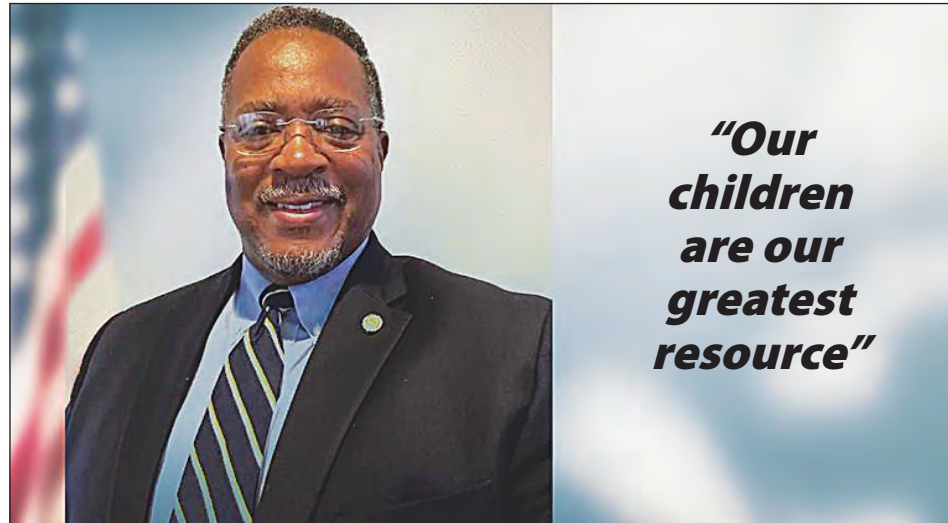


# Elect Michael Wilson Sheriff

I am Michael Wilson. This letter is to officially announce my candidacy for Sheriff of Natchitoches Parish. I am married to Lavora Wilson. We have four children- Megan, Michael II, Tyler, and Alandon. I am starting my campaign by reaching out to you, my friends, and all Natchitoches Parish residents to humbly ask for your endorsement, financial support, volunteer effort, and, most importantly- your vote.

Although my campaign is only months old, I am proud to have been a public servant in Natchitoches Parish for thirty years. I served in the Louisiana National Guard before joining the Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's office. I am a U.S. Army/Louisiana National Guard veteran and proudly served during Operation Desert Storm. I was honorably discharged in 1991.

First, I want to share my thoughts and visions for the Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Office (NPSO). My first order of business will be to strengthen the entire NPSO. Unfortunately, we have lost



many trained and experienced deputies to neighboring parishes. Deputies who were trained using your tax dollars.

As a Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Deputy, I have assisted in providing aid and relief to many citizens during times of disaster, family emergencies, and daily calls for service. I

am proud to have earned the trust of many community leaders, clergy, business owners, law enforcement officials, and most importantly, you, the citizens of Natchitoches Parish.

While being a deputy sheriff for thirty years, I have had the opportunity to work in many areas of the NPSO. I



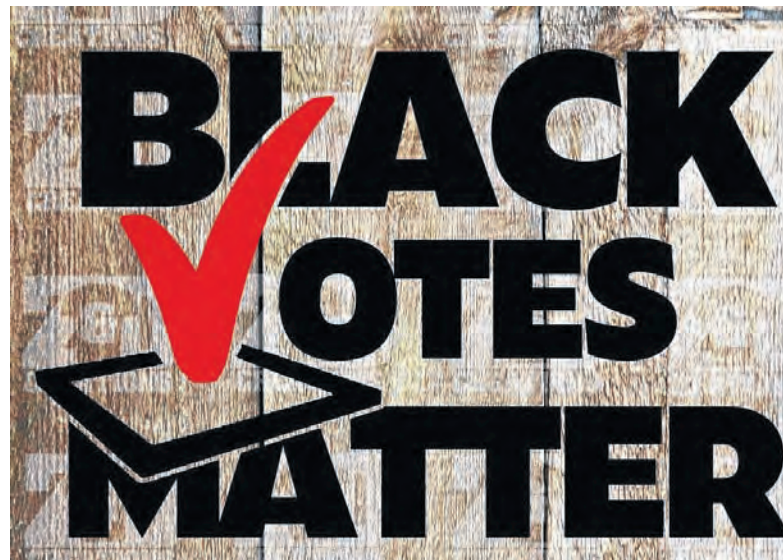
started my career as a dispatcher. From there, I served as a criminal patrol deputy, then moved to the investigation

division. During my fifteen years in this division, I achieved the rank of Assistant Chief Investigator. After returning to the patrol division, I retired as Lieutenant Shift Commander after thirty years of service.

I would also like to make it totally clear, "Our children are our greatest resource." Therefore, I am determined to do all I can to create and maintain a safe environment where they can learn, grow, and feel safe. Not only for the children but also for their parents and loved ones' peace of mind.

Please allow me to put my experience and compassion to work for you by making Natchitoches Parish a safer place to call home.

## Vote for Micheal Wilson as your Sheriff.





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