



The Real Views



October 25, 2024 **Natchitoches Parish** Vol 22 Issue 10

Interview with Retired Criminal Investigator

1. Tell us who you are: Husband, father, retired law enforcement officer

2. What is your affiliation with Natchitoches: family. Grandparents, father and mother grew up in the Natchez / Natchitoches area. As a child, I actually lived down by the Cane River for a few years. It was where one of my grandmothers (Father's mother) lived. My other grandmother (Mother's mother) lived in Natchitoches. So, I got to experience city and country life.

3. Background in law enforcement: I worked my entire law enforcement career, serving the citizens of Harris County. I got a full law enforcement experience with the assignments I worked. Detention, patrol, and criminal investigations. I thought working the streets was absolutely the greatest assignment ever. That is until after being involved in many vehicle and foot pursuits. I recall a particular vehicle



pursuit which turned into a foot pursuit as they often do, and the three suspects bailed from the stolen truck they were in. The suspects ran through multiple neighborhood yards and jumped multiple fences. After the third fence, which I barely got over. I realized it may be time to stop going to work in uniform and start going to work in business attire. Also, after I got over my bruised ego, I realized it was

probably best I didn't catch those three car thieves. It would have been three against one. I was around the fifteen-year mark at that point so, I started looking for openings in criminal investigations. In those last fifteen years, I was assigned to multiple investigative units. Adult Sexual Assaults, Child Abuse, Family Violence, Homicide, and Internal Affairs. It was a privilege to be assigned to all of those units.

However, I found the greatest privilege advocating for the most innocent and vulnerable amongst us. Children. Homicide was the equivalent because it too can involve the innocent and vulnerable or those who are sometimes in the wrong place at the wrong time, or those who live a life that makes them susceptible to possibly becoming a homicide victim. That is an assignment in which you might witness the best in some people. The worst in people or how some people can be petty, pitiful, or downright violent to others for reasons that can amaze, anger, confound, and hurt, so many others needlessly. So, after 30 years in law enforcement, and experiencing the worst society has to offer. I knew I was done. As the old sports saying goes. Sometimes the game tells you when it's over and I heard it loud and clear!

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Interview with Retired Criminal Investigator

4. What do you think are the most effective ways to prevent crime? I don't think it's possible to eliminate crime from society. There will always be those in our society who choose the easier way or the faster way to achieve, whatever goal they long for. There are individuals who, whether due to mental, emotional or psychological disorders or because, unfortunately, there are bad, evil, and violent people, who choose to take advantage of or take from their fellow citizens. Unless the people change crime will likely, always exist in our society. Police can't prevent all crimes, because for the most part, law enforcement is reactive. Law enforcement is trained to react and respond to the crime after the fact. At that time, you detain and or arrest, if possible. Otherwise, you simply ask a series of questions. Who (Victim, witness, suspect), what (Crime committed, damage, injuries, when (date and time), where (offense location, suspect / victim / witness location) and how (offense committed / weapon(s) used). Information which is then documented in the form of an offense report and forwarded for additional investigation. Whether or if and when that follow-up

investigation will be conducted depends on many things. The most important of which is, personnel. Are there personnel available for follow-up investigation.

5. What can be done to help promote the public's trust in police? It goes back to the mid-eighties when community-oriented policing was initiated by large police agencies across the country. I think it was just a popular title for what police were doing already. But this particular form of policing, emphasized getting police officers out of patrol vehicles and on their feet. Foot patrol, bicycle patrol, town hall meetings, and other programs where the intent was to form a healthier, more trusting relationship between the police and citizens. It also involved advocates, churches, and other community leaders, working hand-in-hand with the police to establish and or increase the level(s) of trust between the community and police.

6. Do you think incarceration is the most effective way to control crime?

No opinion. Some folks just belong there, and they get out and go right back. It's almost like a vacation for some.

7. With having only 1 unsolved

murder under your leadership, how were you able to accomplish this? Any special equipment, technology, drones etc. – the completion of a police investigation does not always involve great work by the officers or investigators. Often the successful completion of an investigation also involves cooperation of the community. While technology has given law enforcement an edge. It often comes down to hitting the streets and speaking with victims and witnesses. It can also require that egos are set aside. There are times when police officers get in their own way and can become narrowly focused in one or the wrong direction. It's those times when you have to be willing to listen to others, which can be problematic, in a partner

/ squad type situation. Allowing oneself to hear other opinions, points-of-views and utilizing the experience and knowledge of others can be essential in a successful outcome. I recall a comment from an instructor in the police academy that policing is 10% knowledge and 90% common sense. I found that to absolutely be the case, quite often, with some officers and citizens. The terms Keystone Cops and Worlds Dumbest Criminals aren't coincidental. Any successful investigations I experienced were due to that old adage, follow the evidence. You then stay focused but not narrow-minded and utilize the law, procedures and technology at hand to your advantage.

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The Real Views

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Violence and Young Black Males

By: Marvin Blake Jr.

In February of 1976, Michael Wayne Coney, my classmate, and a member of Natchitoches Central High Schools basketball team collapsed and died on the gym floor while playing in a basketball game against Captain Shreve High School in Shreveport, Louisiana. All his classmates, the entire basketball team, school, and Natchitoches Community were all heartbroken and devastated when he passed away. The realization of a young teenage male dying at age 16 was just unheard of and hard to digest.

On August 30, of this year, the Real Views Newspaper printed pictures of 18 Black Males and two Black Females who have been murdered here in the City and Parish of Natchitoches. Only two days after the printing of the paper, on September 1, 2024, a young Black Male who was only 24 years of age was murdered on Lake St. over on Jackson Square. Although there was another shooting a day later where the victim survived,

on September 24, 2024, a 17-year-old Black Male was murdered on July St. in the Bailey Heights Community. Throughout 2024, there have been numerous reports of violence in the city and parish of Natchitoches.

And so, the question that needs to be addressed, why do so many young black males have so little regard for the lives of other black males? Where did the mindset of young black males murdering other young black males come from? Institutional racism? Poverty? Poor School System? No father in the home(s) of these young black males?

Dr. L Lewis-McCoy, a professor of sociology and black studies at City College of New York, asked the questions, where do you think many of the young men involved in the violence derive their values from? He said that we cannot forget that young black males are members of an American society which glorifies material wealth but society's members with the **fewest routes** available



to gain that wealth without putting their own and others' lives in danger. He went on to say that "given the high levels of segregation that many Black males grow up in, with decreased employment opportunities, long term unemployment, and failing schools and inadequate housing limits the chances for young Black males to develop a sense of healthy self-worth.

Eddie Glaude Jr., a professor of religion and African American studies at Princeton University and MSNBC Contributor said that we all need to broaden our understanding of victimization. He said that the killing of young black males by other young black males is a horrible act,

but we all must understand the context that produced it. He went on to say, "It isn't simply that these young black men are evil." He said that "in so many ways, American society has failed them". He said, "I am not taking about removing these young men from their responsibility for the crime but saying that the world that produced them should share in the blame".

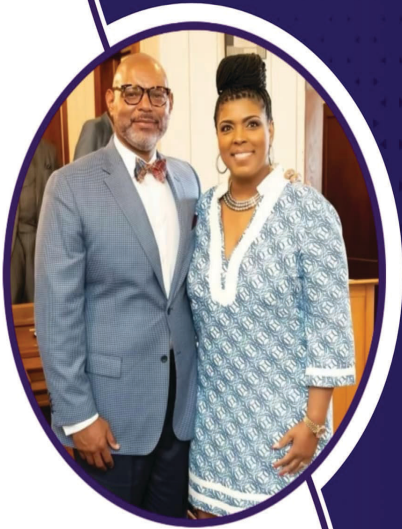
As I close, if there is a problem in an Asian community, being an older black man, I would have no idea how to help solve the problem. This is why I wholeheartedly believe that the problem that is going with our young black males has to be solved by black people, especially black men!

That's My View!


ON POINT
with Marvin Blake, Jr.

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Ole Natchitoches how I miss your values!

By: La'Quinta Scott-Favors

This topic can seem outrageous, right? As a kid, I remember going to the Ben Johnson and getting snacks, going to afterschool programs, and going to block parties! As a kid, I remember adults looking out for other children; it didn't matter if they had children or not! I remember if I ever did something, by the time I got home, my mama was waiting on me! I remember having to be in the house before the streetlights came on. I remember how much law enforcement was a part of the community getting to know us as kids and making sure we knew they cared!

How much the church was a part of the community as a whole and not divided how they are now! Do anyone remember the amazing tent revivals we had, when the mosquitoes would eat us up as praise and the word of God went forth? Those are the values I miss! Daily, weekly, and monthly, so much is getting swept under the rug, multiple unsolved homicides and crimes, so much is not being addressed, so many people are getting upset with the ones that still care about others but yet find a way to make themselves important, leaders are at one another's necks, the jealousy



and pride are ineffective, and the church is looking exactly like the world divided!! Family is a word that we have to use lightly; however, community can become family! We don't have to be the same color

to love one another and do right by one another! We don't have to carry the same blood to want to save the generation that's drowning and dying; we don't have to be cut from the same cloth that helps the ones that's helping others! We don't have to be from the same side of town to want our community back, and we don't have to be from the same church or carry the

same anointing to come together and pray for change! Every time someone brings up the change in Natchitoches, it's that group of people that says, "ITS EVERYWHERE," but guess what? We're not everywhere! We are here; this is our home; this is our community; this is our town, and we must have value and integrity to want to come together and stand up for what's right instead of agreeing with someone because of who they are, how popular they are, and who they know! I say this often: We are better together! We need one another! I know many will disagree, but divided we will not stand!

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Stay in His Will

By: Evangelist & Author
Bonita G. Moses Arnold



“The King’s heart lies in the hand of the Lord, such as streams of the water: He turns it in whatever way he chooses”. Proverbs 21:1. With that being said, stay in his will; even in these trying times we’re facing. It is

not time to faint, but it’s time to pray without ceasing. Please keep the faith and keep your hands in the hands of the one and only King who rules the heavens and the earth, and that is none other than Christ Jesus.



Mama Shug would always say...

“Just because the majority rules, it doesn’t make them right. Don’t follow folks because you like them or think they may be your friends. We all have to stand up as one on the day of judgment.”

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WHY ARE MORE PEOPLE IN JAIL?

By: J. Chris Guillet, Attorney at Law

People continue to ask, “what should be done about the crime problem in Natchitoches?” A typical response is to put more people in jail, for longer sentences, with higher fines, and for more and more different types of crimes. Consider the following points, in no particular order:

1. **More People in Prison.** From 1980 until about 2020, the United States population increased about 46% (from about 226 million to about 331 million). During that same period, the number of people in jail in the U.S. increased about 265% (from about 330,000 to about 1.2 million). (Numbers and statistics vary somewhat, depending on the source selected.)

2. **Louisiana’s Rank.** According to “The Prison Policy Initiative,” Louisiana has an incarceration rate of 1,067 per 100,000 people (including prisons, jails, immigration detention, and juvenile justice facilities), the highest in the world. www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/LA.html (Numbers and statistics vary somewhat, depending on the source selected.)

3. **The Business of Prisons: Fees from Operations.** In most Louisiana prisons, the people housed there must pay hefty fees to use telephones, or to buy items—including food—at the canteen. Telephone services and canteen services are often provided by third-party, for-profit vendors. The prisons contract with these vendors to retain part of the funds, which funds can then be used to pay for programs and other resources that would otherwise be paid for by the local parish or the State. (See also, www.commondreams.org/news/2022/10/12/new-data-tool-details-thousands-corporations-profit-us-prison-industry)

4. **The Business of Prisons: Private Prisons.** According to “The Sentencing Project,” from about 2000 until about 2016, the number of people housed in private prisons (meaning those prisons operated by private companies for profit) increased five times faster than the total prison population. (See www.sentencingproject.org)

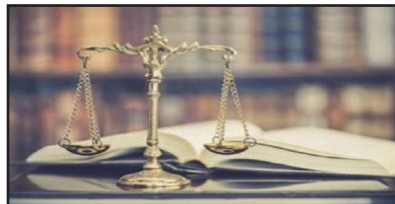
5. **The Business of Prisons: Public Prisons.** Even those prisons that are operated by the State and local parishes are expected to generate a “budget surplus,” meaning that the prison should generate more income than its costs to operate.

6. **The Business of Prisons: Maximizing Utilization.** The State pays each local prison—whether public or private—a specific amount of money per day to house each person there (for those who have been convicted and sentenced). This is the income part of the equation. The cost of running the facility is the expense. Prisons must therefore typically be “filled up,” or nearly so (“maximized”) in order to generate the greatest profits or surpluses. Having more people housed there generates more revenue; many fixed costs are (nearly) the same, regardless of how many people are housed there. (See also, www.vera.org)

Questions: Are prisons simply a necessary public cost of running a parish, like a fire station, or a water department? (That seems to have been the case, for instance, in the distant past, when local “jails” were typically housed in the local courthouse, holding only those people awaiting trials for serious crimes in that parish.) Or have prisons become something different: profit centers that parishes and private companies rely on to generate profits or budget surpluses (or that parishes hope will “pay for themselves”)? If prisons

are for surpluses and profits, and if they must be “filled up” to generate those surpluses and profits, is that a good thing? Is it a good thing that people in prison are charged hefty fees for the use of basic services (as well as hefty fines and other fees)? Does impoverishing people in prison (or on probation) help to lower the crime rate? And if the use of prisons has increased so much, and if people housed there (and on probation) are charged even more, then why does the public perceive that crime is going up? And if our prisons are now profit centers for budgets, and if our parishes now depend on them to generate money to “pay for themselves,” then do our parishes really have any incentive to reduce the number of people in prison—or just the opposite?

J. Chris Guillet grew up in Natchitoches and graduated from Natchitoches Central in 1987. He has practiced law since 1999. Chris currently serves as a part-time public defender for Sabine Parish. He formerly served as a public defender for Natchitoches Parish, Red River Parish, and Rapides Parish. He also served as an Assistant District Attorney for Red River Parish from 2008 through 2017, and for Natchitoches Parish from 2017 through 2023. He maintains a civil practice and a criminal defense practice.



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J. Chris Guillet, Attorney at Law

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Natchitoches (Oct. 2, 2024) – Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Rhodes Realty headquartered in Natchitoches, La., is the latest firm to join the lifestyle real estate brand. With seven offices and over 50 affiliated sales associates, the family-owned brokerage offers personalized expertise in residential, commercial, new construction, land development and rental properties across the entire state of Louisiana.

Brothers James and Justin Rhodes established the brokerage in Natchitoches in 2018 and have rapidly expanded the firm's geographic footprint across the entire state. New Orleans natives James and Justin both earned degrees in civil engineering and started their careers working for a large-scale construction firm. In 2010, they founded their own construction company, specializing in single-family homes, land subdivisions and development, and large government and commercial projects. It was during this time that the pair met Rodrick McIntosh, a life-long real estate professional, Natchitoches native, and current broker of the firm.

McIntosh and the Rhodes brothers place heavy emphasis on family values in each of the company's offices. They pride themselves on a commitment to service, quality and unwavering support throughout the entire transaction. James, Justin, and Rodrick understand that finding the perfect home can be stressful, and they go the extra mile to provide full-service capabilities, helping clients navigate all the complexities in one place.

With seven offices across Louisiana, the Rhodes business is well-acquainted with every region of the Pelican State. The firm's numerous sales associates have deep connections to many of the state's smaller communities like Pineville and Leesville, as well as a deep understanding of Natchitoches, where their home office is located. Louisiana

boasts many attractive places to settle down, thanks to its historic southern charm, one-of-a-kind cuisine, and affordable home prices.

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- Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Rhodes Realty can help new and experienced agents leverage the BHGRE® brand's vast array of tools, technology and resources, including the MoxiWorks® product suite, to help streamline activities and enhance the client experience.

- In addition, affiliated agents can gain a competitive advantage in their market and increase productivity by tapping into the many business-building resources in Be Better University®, the brand's award-winning professional development and learning platform.

- As the firm's lead broker, Rodrick plans to utilize the Better Homes and Gardens® Real Estate brand recognition and sophisticated marketing assets to increase awareness and grow their existing agents' books of business. He also plans to utilize these assets to strengthen the firm's presence in some of Louisiana's largest markets, as well as to eventually pursue future growth opportunities in Mississippi and Eastern Texas.

- James and Justin place heavy emphasis on community involvement, and they regularly support their agents' passion projects by contributing to local schools, churches and athletics programs. Every year, the company contributes tens of thousands of dollars and countless hours towards the development of new relationships in the communities they serve.

"When you hear the story of James and Justin Rhodes, two brothers who built their thriving, multi-faceted business from scratch, it's difficult not to become invested. The pair have worked in lockstep to develop an impressive footprint in Louisiana real estate that spans several adjacent industries. We know that James and Justin will propel Better Homes and



Gardens Real Estate forward within Louisiana and, in turn, leverage the brand to help them do the same in their current and future markets."

- Ginger Wilcox, President, Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate LLC

"If something touches a real estate transaction, we want to be a part of it. My brother, every one of our affiliated agents, and I never stop at 'good enough.' Our key differentiator is that we are not only willing to go the extra mile, but we also have the know-how to solve all of the extra issues that come with it; we're a true one-stop shop. This work ethic has allowed us to flourish within our existing service areas, but we still want to do more. We believe that Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate is the key to making that possible. With our reputation and expertise, along with the support and recognition of an iconic brand, we are confident in our ability to elevate our current offerings and tap into new areas."

- James Rhodes, Owner/Operator, Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Rhodes Realty

"We buy into everything we do 100%. Whether it be the largest transaction in our company's history or a fundraiser for the local Little League team, we are a company that prides itself on its ability to commit to the cause at hand. Our affiliation with Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate is no exception to this rule. We are so excited to work alongside an international brand that shares our family-first philosophy and has a company culture that so closely reflects our own."

- Justin Rhodes, Owner/Operator, Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Rhodes Realty

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fore we lean into the new tools and capabilities that the Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate brand has to offer. Internally, we know we have the work ethic and knowledge to turn these tools into opportunities, and we can't wait to leverage that capability in attracting more agents, pursuing future success, and continuing to grow our brand."

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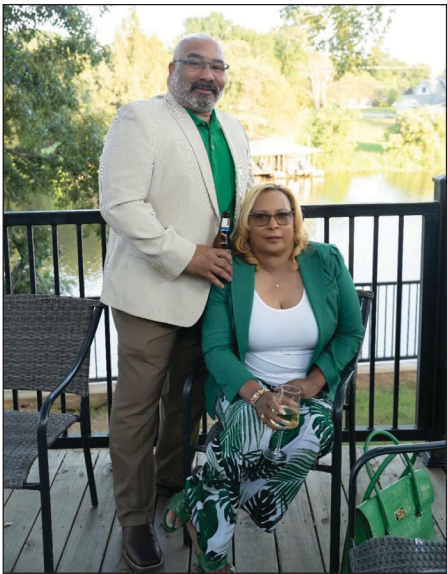
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CITY OF NATCHITOCHES ANNOUNCES a \$292,867.00 RURAL AND SMALL DEPARTMENT VIOLENT CRIME REDUCTION PROGRAM GRANT WIN



PRESS RELEASE

Natchitoches Mayor Ronnie Williams, Jr., announces an additional effort to address the nation-wide rise in crime and enhance community safety. The Strategic Enforcement to Reduce Violence through Engaging the Natchitoches Community, SERVE Natchitoches, is a multifaceted, comprehensive initiative with aims to implement evidence-based strategies that foster collaboration among law enforcement and the Natchitoches Community.

The City of Natchitoches has been awarded the Rural and Small Department Violent Crime Reduction Program Award for 3 years. Natchitoches is one of only twelve cities nationwide to be awarded funding this cycle through the Rural and Small Department Violent Crime Reduction Program. Grant expenditures will include \$73,340 in cameras and pedestals as well as \$126,301 allocated for personnel.

Personnel expenditures will fund training expenses including equipment acquisition and instructor certifications for Senior Patrol employees, Citizen Academy, and Rape Aggression Defense (RAD).

The Senior Patrol will respond to welfare checks to evaluate the condition of our most vulnerable citizens providing

support and intervention when individuals may be vulnerable or in crisis.

The Citizen Academy will help citizens become better equipped to engage with law enforcement and advocate for their communities.

Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) training is a self-defense program specifically designed to empower individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to defend themselves against sexual assault and aggression.

"I am proud to announce yet another in a long line of initiatives aimed at enhancing public safety and fostering a stronger, more resilient community," said Mayor Williams. "As mayor of our amazing city, it is my top priority to ensure every resident feels safe and secure in our city. This initiative represents our commitment to addressing the needs of our residents through a holistic, community policing approach. By focusing on targeting interventions, community engagement, and prevention, we aim to build trust between the police and the residents of Natchitoches resulting in a safer, more unified city for everyone."

Nikeo Collins, Sr., Natchitoches Police Chief and 30-year NPD employee, stated about this colossal win, "We are excited to have received funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance for our SERVE NATCHITOCHES project which will benefit the citizens of Natchitoches in a multitude of ways. Citizens have

often asked law enforcement for more community policing and engagement along with demanding that the rise in violent crimes being committed by individuals with no regard for the safety of others to be addressed directly. It has been proven that when citizens and law enforcement work together they are able to identify their most prevalent issues and develop strategies that can help improve the community's quality of life."

Regarding SERVE Natchitoches Chief Collins asserted, "The SERVE NATCHITOCHES project will utilize funding to develop a Violent Crime Task Force that will be geared toward using strategic planning to target and reduce violent crimes in Natchitoches. We are thankful to have been granted funding that will be used to develop partnerships between the community, organizations, and law enforcement to help educate,

communicate, and SERVE Natchitoches."

"All of us at Merchant McIntyre applaud the efforts by the city to address crime reduction in Natchitoches. This highly competitive grant award from the US Department of Justice recognizes Mayor Williams, Chief Collins, and their teams at the city and Police Department as being at the leading edge of national public safety and community policing efforts to reduce violent crime," said Brent Merchant.

For more information about this grant award, please contact the Office of the Mayor at 352-2772 or Chief Nikeo Collins at 318-357-3800.

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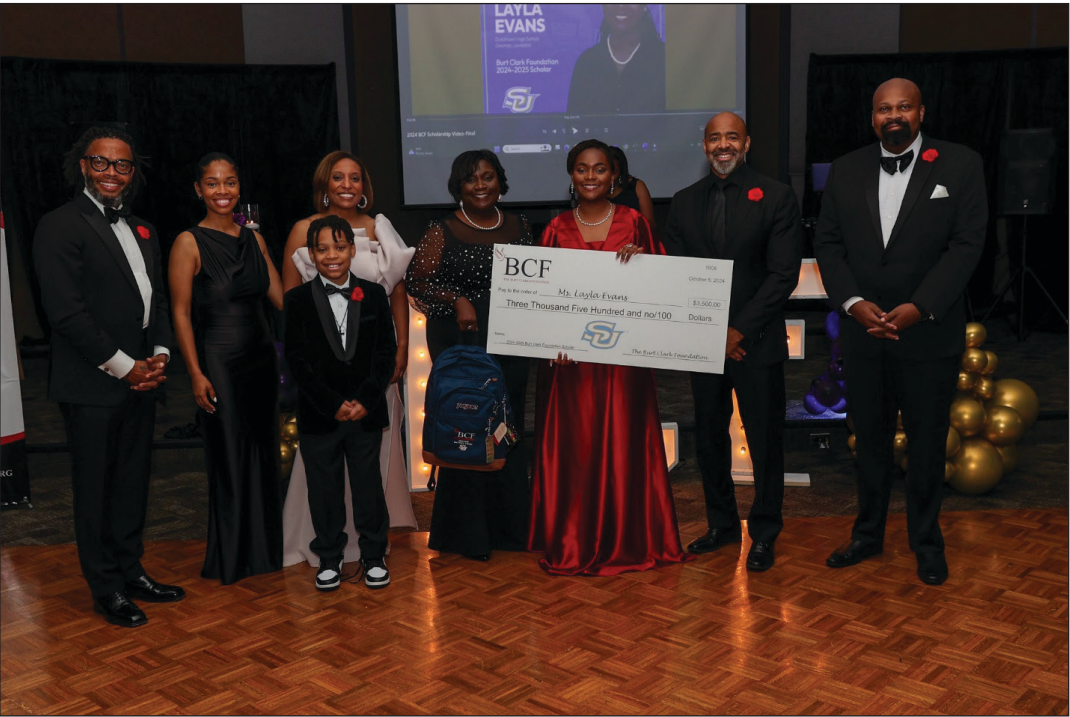
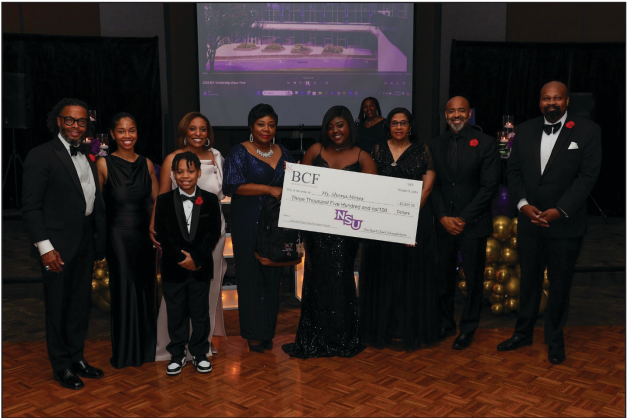
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2024 Burt Clark Foundation Black Tie Fundraiser Gala



2024 Burt Clark Foundation Black Tie Fundraiser Gala



Continued from Page 2...

Interview with Retired Criminal Investigator

Questions 9, 10 and 11 are answered together

9. How should law enforcement adapt to this new generation and crime?

10. Do you support having an independent oversight body to monitor and review police departments' policies and practices?

11. How important is it for the police to collaborate with community organizations and leaders?

Police response and interaction with this generation is and likely be the same as it has always been. Reactive and based on information provided to communications / 911 and the actions of those, agitators, bystanders, witnesses, and or suspect(s) on the scene. Actions by police officers are usually based on information received prior to arrival at the scene and what is observed on arrival. It is said and is true. Police officers sometimes have seconds to act and others, the public, lawyers, and the courts, have days, weeks, months, and

years to scrutinized and judge those actions. We all know, sometimes those actions are wrong and deadly and sometimes, ultimately, the criminal justice system gets it right. It can be slow most times. If we allow ourselves to look at the situation and ask why an individual would put themselves in a situation, where a potentially use of force or deadly force situation could occur, it may explain why often police officers are either not indicted or if they are, not found guilty in the resulting trial. Let's be clear! Without clarification, shooting through a window, a closed door, or being in someone's home and shooting them because there is a pot of boiling water on the stove cannot be defended. However, an individual, in the streets, commits crimes, regardless of how minor the crime. Invites the possibility of an encounter with the police and the possibility of that encounter being deadly.

Continued Page 19...

Trouble is Brewing in the Parish Government's Office

Letter received by mail from an anonymous writer

As a tax paying citizen of the Parish of Natchitoches I am concerned about the allegations made regarding the parish president and the operations inside our parish government. A formal complaint was made in early August by a parish employee but to date I've yet to see any evidence of remedial actions being taken or even an arrest. As a taxpayer with parish roads that are in deplorable conditions I demand answers of where the parish funds are really going, because this claim sounds like a very irresponsible use of public funds. We call with road complaints and we go to meetings and all we hear is the parish is financially destitute but yet we have payroll fraud(see above excerpt from letter) I'm asking parish government officials, Mr President, treasurer, accounting, bookkeeping, payroll departments and Mr District Attorney what procedures are in place to correct these scandalous issues? Is restitution being made? Are the responsible parties who authorized the approval of the fraudulent payroll and the use of taxpayer equipment being held accountable? The taxpayers deserve to know what is truly going on as to why we can't get the services we actually pay taxes for. The last allegation in the complaint is grossly negligent in the day and age we live in. How can we as a parish have elected someone who's head is so far in the sand not to realize you do not put yourself in a compromising situation with subordinates? And why would you put an employee in a position to have to decide if they are comfortable in that type of environment? And why would you ever feel it is okay to discuss inappropriate topics in the workplace? Race and sexual harassment classes are taught in every company so where is the parish lacking here? First and foremost how could the human resource department have failed in such an erroneous way that the opportunity was even available for such a window of opportunity that an employee was ever alone in the presence of their superior of the opposite gender?

Has actions been taken to remedy the racism and sexual harassment claims this employee has made?

We the parish taxpayers deserve answers!

QUOTES BY RANDY STELLY

"Your vote is your voice. Let it be heard election day."

Randy Stelly



Hannah Davis of Hammond named Miss NSU and Terrell Woodard, Jr. of Carencro named Mr. NSU

NATCHITOCHES – Hannah Davis and Terrell Woodard, Jr. had different high school experiences. Woodard was heavily involved in high school organizations while Davis kept to herself. But both are very engaged in student activities at Northwestern State University. Their efforts to improve the university have been recognized by fellow students as Davis was selected as the 2024 Miss NSU and Woodard was selected as Mr. NSU.

Davis is a senior psychology major with a minor in biology from Hammond. Davis is vice president of the Student Government Association and president of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She is a member of Purple Jackets, La Belle Femme and Order of Omega. Davis is an Academic Success Center tutor and is involved in Overtime at NSU. She was a freshman orientation leader, participated in the President's Leadership Program and was Alpha Lambda Delta philanthropy chair.

"I was really shy and kept to myself," said Davis. "I toured NSU and saw a whole new crowd of people and so many different groups I could be a part of. The first thing I got involved with was the President's Leadership Program and Student Government Association. These two organizations led me to so many other impactful things on this campus and led me to helping others get involved and making a difference in my community overall."

Davis was a member of the 2023 and 2024 Homecoming Honor Court. She was an SGA Senator at large and was Student Affairs commissioner for two years. She was named Senator of the Year and Commissioner of the Year. Davis has made the President's List, Dean's List and Honor Roll.

"I think other students should join organizations because it helps you feel more connected and makes college life more enjoyable," said Davis. "I truly cannot imagine myself not being involved. It's gained me so many opportunities and blessings. You can always try new things, make friends and gain experiences that you'll look back on forever."

Woodard is a senior biology major

with a concentration in biomedical sciences from Carencro. He is the 2024-25 Student Government Association president. He is a member of the Theta Chi Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, and is southwest regional assistant vice president of Alpha Phi Alpha. Woodard is a co-founder of the Black Male Alliance and was a freshman orientation leader.

"In high school, I was involved in almost everything that I could've been," said Woodard. "When coming to Northwestern State, I knew that I wanted to heighten my level of involvement to truly give back to the university in any way that I could. For me, being involved helps challenge me to hold myself to a higher standard. Not only do I have to maintain my academics to remain involved in my organizations, but I am surrounded by so many motivated students who make me want to be the best version of myself."

He is a member of Alpha Lambda Delta, the National Society of Leadership and Success, Order of Omega, Blue Key, Helping Hands, the African American Caucus and Demon Volunteers in Progress. Woodard was the Greek New Member of the Year and was part of the 2023 and 2024 Homecoming Honor Court. He has been on the President's List, Dean's List and Honor List.

"I think that students should get involved because it gives you a whole different perspective of the university experience," said Woodard. "Northwestern State has over 100 Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) so there is genuinely room for everyone to find their place. Whether it be service organizations, student government, Greek life or anything else, the world is your oyster. The connections and relationships that are fostered through your involvement here will truly last a lifetime."

Davis said being named Miss NSU has been a goal of hers.

"This honor means a lot to me. I never thought I would receive such recognition from my fellow students, and it shows that my hard work has been noticed," said

Davis. "I have always wanted to be a kind face to all students and treat others how I would want to be treated. My goal at this university was to always make sure when it came to me, students had the opportunity to express their feelings and feel comfortable coming to me overall. This recognition inspires me to keep working hard and to motivate those around me."

Woodard said being named Mr. NSU was also a personal goal.

"I never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that I would receive this honor from my fellow students," said Woodard. "Everything that I've done to get to this point has genuinely been out of a place of advocacy and representation on behalf of our student body. Although I've been blessed to work towards a plethora of accolades, my main goal was to be an honest person who kept their word and followed through on all that I said I was going to do."



SCHEDULE YOUR FREE CAMPUS TOUR

WWW.NSU.LA/TOURS

See residence halls, lab spaces, and classrooms where you'll live and learn as an NSU student. We offer private, personalized campus tours led by our student ambassadors and admissions experts.

The Emma Robinson Williams Education Foundation: Fall Prime Time Family Literacy Wrap-Up

Join us as we celebrate the successful conclusion of our inaugural six-week Fall Prime Time Family Literacy program! This initiative, founded by Emma Robinson Williams, emphasizes the importance of literacy in building brighter futures for families.

Throughout this program, participants engaged in enriching activities designed to foster a love of reading and learning. We are proud to recognize the

commitment of all families who participated, demonstrating their dedication to literacy and education.

Let's continue to honor Emma's legacy by living HER mission: promoting literacy as a pathway to empowerment and opportunity. Thank you for being a part of this transformative journey!

Stay tuned for future programs and events as we keep the momentum going!



Breast Cancer

By: Nikki Madison



Breast cancer is something that is becoming more and more common nowadays. With early detection, it can be caught in time to save your life. I come from a family where breast cancer has affected more than three women. So, I always ensure I get mammograms every year without hesitation. With so many lives touched by cancer, it's important to keep faith and be hopeful that it never happens to you. Getting a mammogram can be nerve-racking and scary. That's because you are waiting on results that can be life changing. I was one of those people this year. So, I recommend to any woman, please get your yearly checkups. Sometimes,

there are no symptoms that certain illnesses can cause, so I would rather be safe and know that everything is okay.

You are brave and stronger than you may think. Even if you have never had one before, create a buddy system. You and some of your closest friends or family can get together and have a let's get a mammogram day. Sometimes, conquering things may frighten you but being with people you trust may help. You can also conduct your own self-examination frequently. Men are at risk, just like women. It's just not as common, but they can also do self-examinations. So please, let's get our yearly checkups and our yearly mammograms. Again, early detection gives you a chance at a higher survival rate and more treatment options if anything is detected. Let's stay ahead of the game. And always take the proper steps to lead a healthier life.

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Richard Davis of Natchitoches Honored by Marquis Who's Who for Transformative Sales and Marketing Leadership

Press Release Submitted by Davis

Richard Davis, a top-rated Sales and Marketing Consultant recognized among the top 3% globally on Upwork, has been honored by Marquis Who's Who for his exemplary contributions to the field of Sales and Marketing leadership. Marquis Who's Who, a prestigious biographical publication that has recognized notable figures such as Warren Buffet and Oprah Winfrey, acknowledged Davis for his innovative strategies and impactful results in helping businesses scale through branded content, marketing automation, and sales conversions.

As a native of Natchitoches, Davis's journey from small-town beginnings to global recognition exemplifies the power of hard work, determination, and staying true to one's values. Davis credits his upbringing, surrounded by



generations of family business owners, as instrumental in shaping his entrepreneurial spirit. "Growing up in Natchitoches,

with its timeless Cane River and rich history, taught me that big dreams can flourish in small towns. My achievements on Upwork and being honored in the Who's Who of America prove that small-town dreams can reach far beyond local borders," he commented.

A Leader in Sales & Marketing

Davis has carved out a distinctive niche in the Sales and Marketing world, offering expert guidance to entrepreneurs and founders seeking to grow their businesses. Through a combina-

tion of branded content, marketing automation, and sales conversion strategies, he has helped numerous businesses improve customer engagement and drive success. His approach emphasizes human connection as a fundamental element, ensuring that businesses can foster authentic and meaningful relationships with their customers, both online and offline.

"In my experience, online or offline, it's all about human connection. My approach helps businesses create authentic experiences that bridge the digital-physical divide, resulting in more meaningful customer interactions and improved bottom-line results," Davis explained.

Marquis Who's Who Recognition

The inclusion of Davis in Marquis Who's Who is a reflection of his prominent leadership and contributions to the

field of Sales and Marketing. Marquis Who's Who, established in 1899, is known for documenting the biographies of notable individuals who have demonstrated leadership, significant accomplishments, and visibility within their industries. The selection process, which involves nominations and comprehensive research, culminates in the recognition of individuals who have made a lasting impact.

This accolade is a testament to Davis's ongoing influence in the industry and his ability to adapt to the changing landscape of sales and marketing while maintaining core traditional values. From his entrepreneurial beginnings selling candy on the playground to being ranked among the top 3% of professionals on Upwork, Davis has demonstrated that ambition, honesty, and hard work can lead to great success.

Diabetes Awareness Month

85% of diabetes-related amputations stem from non-healing foot ulcers.*



At **NRMC Wound Center**, our award-winning care team is helping heal problem and chronic wounds. Using the latest technology we create specialized treatment plans so our patients can get back to living life.

* Healogics Diabetic Wound Facts - Healogics.com

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Located on first floor of NRMC.

NRMC
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Same day appointments are often available.



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Medicine Associates
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Continued from Page 15...

Interview with Retired Criminal Investigator

We all should work together for the good of our community. Common sense, patience, and respect for each other should be the norm. Because we all are human and have our biases, faults, limitations, and because everyone's life experiences sometimes are vastly different. Police agencies utilize reoccurring classes and training with the intended goal of making officers aware and sensitive to the multiple ethnic groups, races, social classes and individuals with mental and emotional disorders they may interact with. These classes and training are intended to provide more acceptable approaches to interactions with individuals during citizen contacts an officer may have on a daily basis. We often hear about, "The Talk." That's the conversation black parents have with their children. Specifically, their sons, where they explain how to behave when they are stopped by the police. It's a real thing and it's a conversation that is absolutely necessary. It's also a conversation most parents have had or should have had with their child, years before you let them out alone in this big bad world. It may now have had a name, but you knew what it was about. What parents(s) haven't had a talk with or tried to tarin their toddler, minor, or teenager about what they should do or how they should behave when I'm (The Parent) is talking to them. Tell me you don't remember a talk with your child, and they rolled their eyes or sucked their teeth. How about when they wouldn't look at you or even worse, tried to walk away. And what was your response? You just let them get away with all that disrespect. LOL, right! Of course they didn't get away

with it. Why? Because at that time, you were the police officer, and they were the citizen. Let's change this to an encounter with a police officer. He stopped you to investigate some illegal, suspicious, or questionable behavior, which the law gives him the right to do and which, someone may have called him to do. And you would expect him to do just that had you called him because of some illegal, suspicious, or questionable behavior, you observed at or around your residence or place of business, etc... The point is quite simple. At that point and time, which we may not like to hear, but that police officer is the parent, and you are the child and if you are disrespectful during that encounter, you may not like the end result. Just like you didn't like getting smacked by your parent or being sent to your room. Most of us didn't get into a fight with our parents. You took it because those are the rules, and they were the parent (Police Officer). During an encoun-

ter with the police, not the time to make demands and say I know my rights. You probably didn't get away with it with your parents, so why try it with a stranger, who has a gun and a badge. Don't get me wrong. Police are trained and know better and should perform professionally and have patience and understanding during citizen encounters. Just like your parents were either trained or became so, when they raised you or a sibling and they know better and should have patience and understanding with you. Now that's funny! It's often repeated at police roll call. The goal is to go home at the end of your shift. So, the goal in the instance of a police encounter by a citizen is to leave that encounter, hopefully, walking or riding away just as you did when you arrived at the encounter. You can always seek justice for illegal or inappropriate or unprofessional behavior afterward.

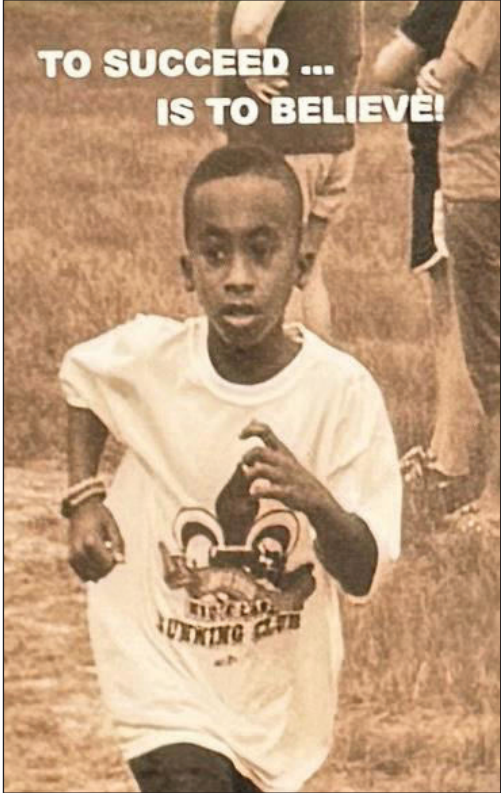
Just as dash cams and body cams, surveillance cameras, and doorbell

cameras are useful tools for deterring or preventing criminal or illicit behavior by our fellow citizens. Those tools can be useful in preventing the same behaviors by law enforcement personnel. As with most things in society, however, the utilization of such tools, along with oversight bodies that oversee, regulate, and can determine disciplinary action and or policy for some police agencies. These resources are only as useful as the individuals, entrusted to utilize them. Can and or will those individuals set aside affiliations, biases, and influences that may prevent or alter what should be a normal human ability to judge the actions or inactions of another. Just as images and video can be altered, deleted, or misinterpreted. We know our human minds, unfortunately, can suffer from that human condition of prejudice. Conclusion: Here we are. In the hands of the citizens and the police, to eliminate or make the issue of law enforcement behavior better or tolerable.





The 1st 5k run or walk kick-off for “Run for Rod” was successful. Family and friends supported this activity on Saturday, Oct. 12th, beginning at the St. Augustine Catholic Church of Isle Brevelle, La. Some of Rod’s NSU E-Lab, & Magnet School friends attended and are in the photo below: beginning left to right, Alex Dollar, Jackson Stewart, Tony Arnold II, Jett Steadman, Jeffrey Frank Jr., & Matt Dunn. Let us please keep the family & friends of Chadwick Jerod “Rod” Nelson II in your thoughts and prayers. Rod passed away on July 5th following an automobile accident.





Village of Natchez Town Hall Grand Opening

Photo credits: Edward Earl Johnson



Village of Natchez Town Hall Grand Opening



Photo Credits: RTSS Photography





Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Office

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2024 SU Jaguar High School Day

I would like to express heartfelt thanks to Mrs. Jacquelyn Rainwater for allowing me to join JAG. Her trust in me is sincerely valued. I encourage all to

remain confident in their abilities, ignoring doubts from others, and strive for a brighter future. Congratulations to you all. *Minster Tristen Jefferson*



Happy Pastor's Appreciation month Pastor Albert Gillie from Minister Tristen Jefferson

For any young preacher, the greatest gift you will ever get is when God has given you a good Pastor. I thank God for my Pastor,

and I dare not let this month slip away without thanking him for all he's done and is doing! May God forever bless and keep you!



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ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

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NOVEMBER 16, 2024

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COME OUT AND SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY

THATS GRIEVING OVER THEIR LOVED ONES

ARTWORK BY ROUNDTABLE STUDIOS SOUTH

Learning To Work Together

By: Herbert de Launay

We need to learn to listen to one another and work together. If two people are pulling in opposite directions, they won't get much done. As we approach the November 5th election, polls say that voters are evenly divided. Will we be able to work together after the election to make progress as communities and as a nation?

In recent elections, someone may get a majority of the votes cast. However, since some people did not vote or could not vote, perhaps due to age, we see that very few officials are actually elected by a majority of the total population. Usually, it is closer to one fourth. On the national level, with the electoral college, sometimes a presidential candidate can receive a majority of the electoral votes without receiving a majority of the popular vote.

Do elected or appointed officials seek to serve everyone, or do they try to push partisan agendas? It is their duty to serve everyone, but historically some have sought to push their personal agendas or the agendas of their group.

The problem of divisions among peoples and groups is not a new problem, and it is not limited to one country. We can see it in churches and other groups.

They had divisions in the time of Jesus. In Luke 10 Jesus gives us the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Some of the people around Jesus looked down on the Samaritans, even as members of one group may look down on members of another group today. Jesus invites us to see that the Samaritan acted with compassion, and he says that we should do



the same. Can we see the goodness and humanity of people of other races or nationalities? If Jesus were telling this parable today, he might speak of the Good Haitian Immigrant.

Paul faced the problems of divisions and rivalry and factions in the early church. In 1 Corinthians 3 he notes that some claimed loyalty to Paul and others to Apollos. Paul said they needed to be loyal to God. Similarly, we are all human beings, even if we are from various political parties, or races, or countries.

In Galatians 5:14-15 Paul notes: "For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you go on biting and devouring one another, beware that you are not consumed by one another." Paul warns us of hatreds, rivalry, selfishness, and factions (Galatians 5:20). He says, "In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). He concludes in Galatians 5:26, "Let us not be conceited, provoking one another, envious of one another."

A few weeks ago, a reporter tried

to get Pope Francis to take sides in the U.S. election. Pope Francis merely briefly noted disagreement with both candidates and did not choose sides. Instead, Pope Francis keeps pointing to the deeper issues of our divisions and our failures to respect one another and listen to one another.

The issue, as Jesus and Paul also noted, is the divisions and jealousies and factions among us. The problem is that we are unable to listen to one another because we are each loudly shouting our own positions. We no longer see one another as family, as brothers and sisters. We see others as threats and competition.

This issue is present throughout the world. It is present in our churches. Pope Francis has frequently spoken about the importance of dialogue.

He has involved church leaders and members in the Synod on Synodality. The word synod is from the Greek, the language of the New Testament. It refers to "walking together". The emphasis is on learning to really listen to one another, to people of different groups or with different viewpoints.

But of course, listening does not just apply to politics or churches. We can do a Google search for "listening skills" and find a number of suggestions on how to apply this in our daily lives and everyday relationships.

If we learn to really listen to one another and work with one another, we will be able to accomplish much more than if we merely bicker and find fault with one another.



November 14, 9 am
Natchitoches Council on Aging
1016 Keyser Ave

The Public is invited on 10/26/24 at 4 pm to

Doffie Benjamin Sr's Memorial and
Balloon Release Service at Amulet First
Baptist Church, Pastor Thomas Carter.

The Eulogy will be given by Doffie's
Grandson, Jarrod Benjamin.

Dinner will be served.



Review these essential money strategies before taking one of these four steps.

Getting Married?

Talk about money. Discussing finances before the big day can help prevent misunderstandings in the future. Start your marriage with a tone of openness about money.

Get specific. Create a budget, discuss how to pay down outstanding debt, discuss long- and short-term savings goals, like saving for a home, vacation, and retirement. Couples who make money decisions together are more confident about their financial future.¹

Protect each other. No one wants to think about what would happen in the event of tragedy or loss, but when you are married, it is important to discuss your plans if something unexpected happened. Your new spouse may depend on your income even if he or she earns as much or more than you do. While nothing can replace a spouse, a term life insurance policy is a good way to protect another financially.

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Having a Baby?

Speak to a licensed life insurance agent about your life insurance needs. Ask your life-licensed Primerica Representative for a complimentary Financial Needs Analysis (FNA) to assess whether your family is properly protected.

Prepare a will. It is important to legally name a guardian for your children in the event of your death. Without a named guardian, the state could appoint the guardian for your children.

Save for college. Between 1980 and 2020, the average price of tuition, fees, and room and board for an undergraduate degree increased 180%.² The sooner you begin saving — even \$100 a month — the more you will have for your child’s future.

Preparing for College?

Be smart about student loans. As a rule of thumb, try to keep student loan debt at 50% or less than the student’s expected starting salary. Considering a parent PLUS loan? Try not to borrow more than you can repay within 10 years or by retirement, whichever is first.³ Hands off that 401(k)!

Discuss money management. High school graduates may not know how to budget or avoid banking or credit card fees. Set them up for success by discussing money matters in advance.

Graduate on time. Budgeting for a four-year stay? Recent data show 62% of students in the United States complete their college program within six years.⁴ Make sure your student carries the maximum course load (not just the minimum for full-time enrollment). Otherwise, you’ll wind up paying for an extra year, and the average is currently \$29,150 for public and \$41,540 private.⁵

This material is intended only for general education purposes and is not a solicitation of a life insurance policy.

Wishing a great
MARDI GRAS SEASON
to
**KING EXCELLENCE X
MR. NIKEO COLLINS, SR.**
**QUEEN EXCELLENCE X
MS. JACQUELINE LAWSON**
AND THE 2024 - 25 ROYAL COURT
LAISSEZ LES BON TEMPS ROULER
"ALL HAIL"

Congratulations Bre'Ajhanae Grayson, Jason Brock, Deandre Braxton, Shanita Grayson, Danna Thomas Lacaze, Chad Fredieu and Shelby Tutor on their induction to the Lakeview Hall of Fame!

Photo Credits: Gator Athletics



Congratulations Jeremiah Slate!



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Domestic Violence

By: Author Shelia Renee Pierre

Our homes should be a place of peace with the people we love and call family. Trouble will make its way into many homes in the United States. Occasional disagreements are expected, but continuous drama is a problem.

Everybody deserves to have a relationship based on love, trust, honesty, respect, communication, and feeling safe. Home shouldn't be filled with control and fear. Domestic violence, or "intimate partner violence," is never acceptable.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. This is not an easy topic to discuss, but it's necessary to shine a light on this worldwide epidemic. The United States Department of Justice defines domestic violence as "a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that one partner uses to gain or maintain control over another intimate partner. "This crime will touch the lives of every ethnic group, every culture, regardless of sexual orientation, whether we are wealthy or poor, male or female. Men get abused, too.

There are many types of violence, but Physical Violence, Verbal Violence (including hate speech), psychological violence, Sexual Violence, and Socio-economic Violence are the five main types. A Google search stated, "More than 10 million adults in the United States experience domestic violence each year. This means that an adult in the U.S. experiences violence more frequently than every 3 seconds." These statistics are alarming.

On average, it takes a victim about seven attempts before they finally leave their abuser. The violence escalates after each attempt. Adults not only experience the different types of violence, but many of them lose their lives. The age-old question never goes away. Why do people stay? Fear, shame, feeling nobody will believe them, financial stability, "breaking up the family," and not being mentally and emotionally strong enough to leave are some of the reasons people stay trapped in unhealthy relationships.

Proverbs 11:29 says, "Whoever troubles his own household will inherit the wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise of heart. This verse is a warning about the consequences of selfishness and evil, especially in relationships. Nothing will be left of the family." Scripture is full of condemnations of violence – time and again, violence is associ-



ated with wickedness and condemned as "detestable to the Lord" (Psalm 11, Proverbs 3 & 10). In particular, violence against women is condemned.

Family and Friends, how can you help? Please don't blame the victim. Do not say, "If I were you." Listen to them and believe what they are sharing with you. Do not share their story with others. Ask them what you can do to help. Be a part of their support group. Let them know you will always be there for them.

Because I am a survivor, I must tell you: If you're in an abusive

relationship, break the silence. Tell somebody! Yes, pray and talk to God, and you can also talk to family/friends you trust. You matter. You're not to blame. Love you more. Forgive, heal, and keep going. Make a safety plan and leave. Help is always available. Call 1-800-799-7233, Domestic Violence Hotline, 911, or reach out to support groups, shelters, mental health services, or crisis hotlines. Remember This: Love doesn't hit, hurt or isolate. Love is kind. Abuse is not love. 1 Corinthians 13:13: "And now, these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love."

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Home Banking	Online Banking App

2024 Burt Clark Foundation Scholarship Recipients



Proclamation signed at the Natchitoches City Council meeting held October 14th declaring the month of October 2024 as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Pictured from left to right: Councilwoman at large Betty Sawyer Smith, Sadie Sawyer (received proclamation in honor of two loved ones), Mayor Ronnie Williams Jr.

Congratulations to the Graduates at Ben D. Johnson Educational Center



Pictured from bottom left to right: Myeshia Jackson, Shaquethia Sawyer, Xavier Hicks
Top left to right: Jermicah Jones, Tiya Bremsy, Carhonda Evans, Dr. Young, Richard Reliford, Shatterrica Demars, Charles Colman

Dennis Payton Retires from Pilgrim's Pride after 33 Years of Service



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