

“Happy 250th Anniversary”

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SERVING THE BLACK COMMUNITY WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR SINCE 1947

July 2 - 8, 2026

COMMENTARY: The Voting Rights Act Didn't Fail — the Country Abandoned its Moral Commitment to it

By **Anneshia Hardy** | The AFRO
Source: Black Press USA Wire

There is a dangerous narrative taking shape in this country right now, one suggesting that the Voting Rights Act simply outlived its usefulness. That the protections once necessary during the Civil Rights era are now outdated remnants of a different America. That the country evolved beyond the conditions that made federal oversight necessary in the first place.

But both history and the present tell a far more troubling story.

The Voting Rights Act did not fail. The country abandoned its moral commitment to it. That distinction matters because framing the current crisis as a “failure” of the Voting Rights Act obscures what actually happened. For decades, the law worked exactly as intended because it recognized an uncomfortable truth America still struggles to confront: when left unchecked, political systems and those who benefit from unequal power structures adapt in order to preserve that power.

The Voting Rights Act understood that racial discrimination in voting would not simply disappear because Congress passed legislation or because the country congratulated itself for progress. It understood that exclusion evolves. When literacy tests became illegal, new barriers emerged. When poll taxes were struck

down, district lines became weapons. When openly segregationist language became politically toxic, lawmakers learned to repackage exclusion in the softer language of “election integrity,” “states’ rights” and “race neutrality.” The strategy changed. The objective did not.

That is why preclearance under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act mattered so deeply. It required jurisdictions with documented histories of racial discrimination to receive federal approval before changing voting laws. It was not punitive. It was preventative. And for decades, it worked. But in 2013, the Supreme Court’s decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* gutted the coverage formula that made preclearance enforceable. The Court argued that the country had changed enough that such protections were no longer necessary. What followed should have shattered the illusion of a “post-racial” democracy. Instead, we witnessed voter purges, polling place closures concentrated in Black communities, attacks on absentee voting, racial gerrymandering battles and legislation across Southern states making democratic participation harder and more fragile.

Now, more than a decade after *Shelby*, we are

Continue **Voting** Page 4

First-of-its-kind GOP midterm convention coming to Dallas in September, Trump says

By **Gabby Birenbaum**, The Texas Tribune

President Donald Trump on Tuesday announced the Republican Party will hold a September midterm convention in Dallas, bringing the president to Texas for a high-profile event to promote the GOP ahead of the fall election.

“Dallas will take center stage on September 9th and

10th as we celebrate our Nation, our achievements and our bright future,” Trump said in a post on his social media site, Truth Social.

The Republican National Committee had publicly discussed plans to host a first-of-its-kind gathering for a midterm election year

and explored Dallas as a host site. The convention will gather GOP politicians and candidates months before the November election and place Texas — where Republican Ken Paxton and Democrat James Talarico are locked in a competitive Senate race — at the center of the national conver-

sation.

Paxton, the three-term attorney general, relayed the news at a tele-town hall earlier this month, according to CNN, telling listeners he expected Trump to attend and that it would be held in Dallas.

Continue **GOP** Page

Dallas will furlough 4,200 city employees amid budget gap

By **Joshua Fechter**, The Texas Tribune



Flags wave outside the Dallas City Hall in Dallas on July 11, 2024. Photo Credit: Azul Sordo for The Texas Tribune

Dallas will furlough more than 4,200 city employees for three days to counteract a \$30 million budget shortfall expected this year, city officials said Tuesday.

The state’s third largest city has seen higher-than-expected costs this year as its revenue fell short, driven by a drop-off in expected

sales tax revenue. Overtime for police officers and firefighters and increased health care costs for employees, including higher medication costs for treatments such as GLP-1s, helped drive costs beyond what the city had planned, Dallas officials said in May.

To help bridge the gap, about half of the city’s civ-

ilian employees must take off work without pay on July 10, Sept. 4 and Sept. 28, city officials announced. A group of city executives must also take another two unpaid days off sometime before Sept. 16.

“Furloughs are not our preferred solution,” Dallas City Manager Kimberly Bizzor Tolbert said in a state-

ment. “However, they enable us to reduce expenses, protect jobs and employee health benefits, and continue delivering services to our residents.”

In a statement responding to the furloughs, Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson called on the city council to

Continue **Dallas** Page 4

IN MEMORIAM: The Tennessee Tribune Family Mourns the Passing of its Founder, Publisher and Chief Executive Officer, Rosetta Miller-Perry



Rosetta Miller-Perry / Courtesy photo.

BLACKPRESSUSA NEWSWIRE — Rosetta Miller-Perry has been described as a trailblazer, visionary, motivator, role model and entrepreneur. She was either a founder or charter member of several organizations. She established the Black Chamber of Commerce so that Black businesses could be recognized and participate in civic and business benefits.

By **Phyllis Qualls** and **Tennessee Tribune Staff Contributors**

Rosetta Miller-Perry, trailblazer, visionary, bridge builder and motivator, passed peacefully on Friday, June 26, surrounded by family. She was 91.

Shortly after she passed, the family posted a message on the Tennessee Tribune’s website. Perry’s remarkable

presence and influence extended throughout Tennessee and beyond.

After graduating from high school in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania, she joined the Navy and earned an honorable discharge. She began

Continue **Perry** Page 3



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EDITORIAL PAGE

Our Country Is on a Roller-Coaster Ride of Economic Uncertainty and Veiled Discrimination

By James B. Ewers Jr., Ed.



Dr. James Ewers

Going to the fair as a child was a special outing. Of course, our parents took us because we didn't have any money. The games and rides weren't free.

One of my favorites was tossing a nickel onto some plates and getting them. Sometimes if I was lucky, I'd come home with a few plates, cups and bowls. I am not sure what my mom did with them.

Another game was what I'd call playing the ducks. You would pay the operator a fee and be able to pick these plastic ducks out of the water. At the bottom of the duck would be a number corresponding to a prize. We kids would compare prizes and laugh about them, too.

One of the most exciting rides at the fair in Winston-Salem, NC, was the roller coaster. The lines to get on it were always long. Everybody wanted to feel the twists and turns. It would

change course at a moment's notice. The ride always came with its share of surprises. You never knew which direction it was going, and how you would feel afterward.

I liken my roller coaster rides to what is happening in American politics today. There are ups and downs, detours and roadblocks. One day you are up, and the next day you are down.

Consistency is a word we don't hear a lot in our political framework anymore. We want it, but instead we get instability and inconsistency. For example, is the war in Iran really over? Until recently, it was fraught with threats, intimidation and flawed decision-making. That is my opinion.

Men and women of color in the military are being denied promotions, forced to retire early, or simply fired. Sean Parnell, the Pentagon's chief spokesperson, has another view. He said, "The department will never consider the color of a service member's skin or their gender as a factor in promotions." The record shows that the Navy did not comment.

Many years ago, the pro-

lific Black poet James Baldwin made a profound statement that is appropriate today. He said, "I can't believe what you say because I see what you do."

Consumers are going to grocery stores and seeing prices that have increased dramatically over the past few years. The administration seems to have a nonchalant attitude about it. According to NBC News, ground beef prices are up 21% from January 2025.

With these prices escalating, Americans are having to pick and choose what to buy. Budgets are tight so spending isn't what it once was. Buying a little more has become a thing of the past.

July 4th will be coming soon. Will it be different this year? Most Americans believe that it will be. There won't be as many hot dogs and hamburgers on the grill. We will have cookies instead of cake for dessert.

Taking trips by air has become more expensive. Reports say, "Flight prices are surging due to a spike in jet fuel costs and strong travel demand." We still want to visit our family and friends, but can we afford

it? While gas prices have increased in recent months, traveling by car seems to be what many families are doing these days. According to the American Automobile Association, 72.2 million Americans will travel at least 50 miles from home for the upcoming Independence Day holiday weekend. This includes an all-time high of over 61 million travelers hitting the road despite rising gas and hotel prices.

As atmospheric temperatures rise, our understanding of world events has cooled. Our relationships with other countries have become more strained and contentious. Laws we almost took for granted are now being re-written to fit a certain group or organization. Some might say that we are becoming consistently inconsistent.

Where does this leave the greatest country in the world? It renders us confused, baffled, and dismayed. Many of our elected officials are left without a clear path to lead. Instead of leading, they are being led. Will that change? That is the question of the day.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Quinn Simple Scenes

Math mystery

By Rix Quinn

I won't forget my first day in geometry class. I tried...but the memory is too painful.

I could grasp algebra because the girl sitting next to me explained how it could solve complicated problems or figure out how long it might take me to go a certain distance at a specific speed.

I learned how a car starting on the West Coast and another starting on the East Coast could travel at the same speed and meet in mid-America. But I never found out why they met there or whether they were related.

But in geometry class, only two lazy guys sat next to me. One slept a lot. The

other one used his ruler to carve football shapes on his desk.

Meanwhile, at the chalkboard (this was long ago), the teacher explained that geometry could help us build things that fit together by examining their angles and shapes.

After a few weeks, I was told to buy graph paper to practice drawing angles. I liked that paper, and I colored every other square to create a checkerboard.

Next, we learned to write out problems, develop solutions, and to show proof. "Teacher," I asked, "why do I need to show proof if I just wrote the answer? Isn't that proof enough?"

That was not the proof

he wanted or what the book required. Fortunately, I could go to our school's "learning center," staffed by college math majors.

A young man and woman coached me during lunch period and explained geometry well. It soon became clear that the couple found each other acute, and that after class, they both angled for romance.

After my painful start in geometry, I finally squeaked by with a solid D-minus. I never approached the perimeter of another math class.

What about those two romantic tutors? They broke up, and each started dating a different math major. This divided the first

couple, but multiplied the date events.

Soon, both new couples announced wedding plans. For me, this added up to two wedding invitations, two free meals at the receptions, and one job offer for the summer.

At that age, those were all positive numbers for me.

Ever wanted to write your life story to share with family members? Here's the link to a series of simple steps you can follow to finish this project. And this Simple Scenes presentation is inexpensive, too: <https://payhip.com/b/b7mDQ>

RELIGIOUS/NEWS

The Apostle John's Letter to the Church at Pergamos

Revelation 2:12-17



Rev. Johnny Calvin Smith

The Apostle John's letter to the church at Pergamos may be outlined under six headings: Destination (2:12), The Lord (2:12), Commendation (2:13), Condemnation (2:14-15), Exhortation (2:16), Promise (2:17).

Destination (Revelation 2:12)

The city of Pergamos was located about seventy miles north of Smyrna. It was perhaps the most important city in Asia, noted for having a famous medical school, and a library of over 200,000 volumes, and was the place where parchment was first used. The church of Pergamos is representative of church history during the period from A.D. 315 until A.D. 500.

The Lord (Revelation 2:12)

Christ, the source as well as the focus of this letter, identified

Himself as the One with the sharp, two-edged sword protruding from His mouth (Revelation 1:16; 2:16; 19:15, 21). The sword symbolizes judgment and separation. The Word of God cuts away impurities in His church and executes judgment on non-believers. The Word of God has the definite answer to man's need and man's sins, which in Pergamos was false religion.

Commendation (Revelation 2:13)

Christ was quite aware that these believers were serving Him under severe circumstances. It was suggested that Christ's reference to Satan's seat was in Pergamos because it was the most important center for emperor worship in Asia. Like its sister church in Smyrna, the church at Pergamos was standing firm for the faith even in the midst of sa-

tanic opposition. This church did not renounce their faith as they felt the heavy hand of persecution as those of the imperial cult who proclaimed that "Caesar is Lord;" however, these believers steadfastly affirmed that "Jesus is Lord." Even though Antipas had been put to death for his faithfulness, that fact did not cause these believers to give up their faith!

Condemnation (Revelation 2:14-15)

The Lord had a few things against the Pergamos church in spite of its successes. The church was guilty of compromising with the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. Balaam had tried to fulfill King Balak's request that he curse Israel (Numbers chapters 22-24), but God had not allowed him to do so. Balaam attempted to defeat Israel from within by counseling

the Moabites to get Israel to sin through intermarriage with heathen women and through idol worship (Numbers 31:15-16). Christ also hated the fact that some of them held to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Little is known for certain about this group (Nicolaitans); however, some advocated that this group encouraged self-indulgent conduct, especially in the area of morality. The church in Pergamos was not disciplining those who were compromising with pagan worship and immorality.

Exhortation (Revelation 2:16)

Christ's instruction was simple: "Repent." They needed to confront those who were corrupting the church. If they refused, Christ would come quickly and fight against them. Christ will judge them with the sword of His mouth. Compr-

mise with the world and immorality in the body of Christ will be judged by God.

Promise (Revelation 2:17)

Jesus gave a promise for those who would listen and obey. They would be given the hidden manna (Divine food) and a white stone (Divine favor) with a name on it. The hidden manna Christ offers in verse 17 was all the spiritual food the church needed. The overcomer (believer) is also promised a white stone (Divine favor), for he or she is eternally secured, for John 5:24 states: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath ever-lasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

May God Bless!

Continued Perry Page 1

work in the Pentagon and several government departments, including the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. She was an observer in Memphis during the Civil Rights protests and the sanitation protest. She was in Memphis when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. The danger was prevalent because her life was threatened several times.

While working at the EEOC, she was assigned to Memphis to

observe the sanitation protest. And during that time, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. Perry was compromised, and her life was threatened. Yet, she was not afraid and continued her work.

She retired from the federal government after 25 years of service; she established Perry & Perry Associates and started the Black-based Contempora Magazine in 1990 and the Tennessee Tribune in 1991. She could not get a loan; therefore, she used her own funds to establish these

media outlets before AI and cell phone use were so prevalent. The Tribune is now 35 years old.

At the 30th anniversary of the paper, NNPA president and CEO, Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., dubbed Perry "Queen Mother of the Black Press," because of her years in journalism and the impact she has had on the industry.

Miller-Perry has been described as a trailblazer, visionary, motivator, role model, and entrepreneur. She was either a founder or charter member of several organizations. She established the

Black Chamber of Commerce so that Black businesses could be recognized and participate in civic and business benefits.

She was also a founding charter member of the Nashville Chapter of Les Gemmes, Inc., a social and civic group focused on exposing youth to the arts. It was as rewarding to Mrs. Perry as it was to the youth. Whatever she did, she did with tenacity and class because she knew she was right!

Her belief in education was strong, and she has scholarships

in her name at Tennessee State University, the University of Memphis, and Meharry Medical College.

The Celebration of Life services will be Friday and Saturday, July 11 & 12, in Nashville. The Friday night public viewing will be at Lewis & Wright Funeral Directors, located at 2500 Clarksville Pike, Nashville, TN. The funeral will be Saturday, July 11 at Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, located at 7594 Old Hickory Blvd, in Whites Creek, Tennessee.

LIFE IS LIKE A CAMERA, JUST FOCUS ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT!

- THEME: BEVERAGES
(Solution will appear in July 8 edition)

<p>ACROSS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Every which way 5. *Whole milk has about 8 grams of this per cup 8. Sound rebound 12. Not yet final, in law 13. Tibetan teacher 14. Twig of willow tree 15. Bad wishes 16. Like certain tradition 17. Separated 18. *Fermented tea 20. Trampled 21. Herney and Buddy, e.g. 22. Pronoun 23. *Bee's favorite beverage 26. Like blabbermouth 30. Freud's concern 31. Becoming 34. Uncontrolled swerve 35. Type of heron 37. Unidentified John 38. Pocket change 39. Ding follower 40. Kenya's neighbor 42. "Five down" fighter pilot 43. Cuddle, romantically speaking 45. Eras 47. Film director's cry 48. Opinion 50. ___ Bora 52. *Blended fruit beverage 55. *Most-consumed beverage 56. Abbreviation, abbr. 57. Miniature whirlpool 59. The Brady Bunch, e.g. 60. Hanukkah gift 61. Came by horse 62. "For ___ the Bell Tolls" 63. Schiller's famous poem, e.g. 64. One-armed bandit 	<p>DOWN</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Wheel of Fortune" purchase 2. *Most popular choice for official state beverage 3. Nobel Peace Prize capital 4. It's meant to be 5. Travesty 6. Wet nurses 7. Samoan money 8. *Caffeinated "shot" 9. Bye, in Palermo 10. *Group of bovine milk producers 11. Table scrap 13. Mona Lisa's home 14. Presidential promises, e.g. 19. Detonation 22. *Plant-based "milk" choice 23. Must-haves 24. Encourage (2 words) 25. Cornua, sing. 26. Late country singer-songwriter Campbell 27. Relating to ilium 28. *Popular party beverage 29. Affirmatives 32. Competitive advantage 33. New Zealand's bygone bird 36. *Milk+carbonated water+syrup 38. Head of a body part, anatomically speaking 40. Preceding month 41. Send back to mother country 44. Road-crossing helper 46. Not these or those 48. Implant 49. Like duchess or count 50. Johann Sebastian of music fame 51. Sgt. Snorkel's dog 52. Palm starch 53. Object of worship 54. Starchy tuber 55. "Amazing!" 58. Thus far
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2691	100X Sonic Blast Overall Odds are 1 in 3.67	\$10	8/12/26	2/8/27
2699	Reindeer Riches Overall Odds are 1 in 3.75	\$10	8/12/26	2/8/27

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NEWS

Continued Dallas Page 1

to “thoroughly examine every part of our City government for opportunities to reduce spending and improve efficiency.”

“Dallas literally cannot afford to maintain the status quo,” Johnson said.

Police officers, firefighters, paramedics and city employees who staff 911 dispatch centers are exempt from the furlough days. The order also doesn’t apply to workers at Dallas Love Field Airport, in the city’s sanitation department or the city’s Water Utilities department.

Dallas already had taken steps to counteract the crunch in its current budget, like enacting a hiring freeze and getting rid of overtime for non-uniform employees.

Furloughing employees is a dramatic step. Dallas last furloughed city employees at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Texas cities in recent years have increasingly faced budget strain as a result of a stagnant economy, slowing sales tax revenue, inflation, rising public safety costs and strict limits on property tax revenue growth. That pain looks primed to continue as cities draw up their upcoming annual budgets over the summer, with Dallas, Austin and San Antonio each expecting revenue shortfalls.

This article first appeared on The Texas Tribune.

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watching another escalation unfold in real time.

The recent ruling in Louisiana v. Callais threatens to further weaken protections for Black political representation under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. At the same time, states across the South are advancing voting-related bills under the banner of election security. But beneath the procedural language is something far more consequential: a restructuring of democratic access and representation. And the country should be paying close attention. Because what is happening in the South is not isolated regional politics. It is a warning sign for American democracy itself.

Historically, the South has functioned as both the country’s contradiction and its testing ground. Modern voter suppression strategies were refined there before spreading

elsewhere. Today, the region is once again becoming the laboratory for determining how much democratic erosion the public is willing to normalize. And normalization is the real danger.

Because democracy rarely disappears all at once. It erodes through exhaustion, procedural chaos, legal ambiguity and administrative barriers that appear technical enough to avoid moral scrutiny. It erodes when communities begin to feel their participation no longer matters. It erodes when the public becomes more invested in the performance of democracy than its actual practice. Many Americans only recognize voter suppression when it arrives dressed in the imagery of the past. They search for firehoses, literacy tests and segregation signs while overlooking the quieter bureaucratic mechanisms capable of producing the same democratic out-

comes. That selective recognition is produced by historical amnesia.

America remembers the Civil Rights Movement as a story about courage while refusing to fully remember what made that courage necessary in the first place. We celebrate Selma. We quote Dr. King. We repost black-and-white photographs of marchers crossing bridges in pursuit of freedom and democracy. But many of the same institutions that publicly honor that history continue resisting the unfinished demands that movement fought for.

As America approaches its 250th anniversary, we have become a nation deeply committed to commemorating civil rights history while simultaneously weakening the mechanisms designed to protect its gains. Historical memory without historical accountability becomes nostalgia, not justice.

And that nostalgia has

allowed the country to stabilize a dangerous fiction: that racism is primarily historical rather than structural. We now live in a political climate where race-conscious protections are portrayed as threats to democracy while policies producing racially unequal outcomes are framed as neutral governance. That is not evidence that racism disappeared. It is evidence that the language surrounding democracy evolved while many of the underlying power struggles remained intact.

Progress in this country has never happened automatically. Every meaningful expansion of democracy required organizing, pressure, sacrifice, resistance and federal intervention. Voting rights are ultimately about power. Material power. Political power. Community power. And Black political power has

Continue Voting Page 5

SPORTS/NEWS PAGE

7 Day Weather Forecast for DFW

Thursday, July 2



Friday, July 3



Saturday, July 4



Sunday, July 5



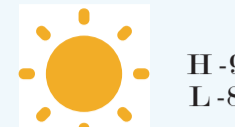
Monday, July 6



Tuesday, July 7



Wednesday, July 8



A DARTable Day for the Museum-Goer



Courtesy photo

If you're a museum lover, North Texas is the place for you. From fine art to history to more offbeat offerings, DART takes you to places that feed your curiosity. Take a day to treat yourself to culture, beauty, and history.

Spend the morning exploring the Dallas Arts District – the nation's largest contiguous urban arts district. Take in the extensive collection at the Dallas Museum of Art, with more than 25,000 works of art. Marvel at world-class Asian artifacts – including a well-known collection of jade sculptures – at the Crow Museum of Asian Art. And see works by Picasso, Giacometti and Lichtenstein at the Nasher Sculpture Center. The whole district is walkable from Pearl/Arts District Station in downtown Dallas along the Red, Blue, Green, and Orange lines. The M-Line Trolley also takes you there.

Grab lunch at one of Klyde Warren Park's many excellent food trucks, or head over to the West End,

a historical neighborhood with turn-of-the-century red-brick warehouses. You'll discover plenty of restaurants and also find landmarks like The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza. The museum documents the life and assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and you'll get a first-hand look at the plaza itself, where the tragic events of November 22, 1963, unfolded. Meanwhile, the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum examines the history of the Holocaust and advances human rights.

Got a taste for the off-beat? The West End is also home to the Museum of Illusions, where you'll find interactive exhibits that challenge your perception. You can shrink, you can grow, and you can take mind-boggling photos at one of the museum's more than 50 exhibits. The popular downtown district is served by West End Station on the Red, Blue, Green, and Orange lines.

Want to make a day of it? Head to Fort Worth and

explore the Fort Worth Cultural District, a scenic, park-like neighborhood that brings together five world class museums, striking modern architecture and rich Western heritage. The Kimbell Art Museum is renowned for its high-quality collection focused on Asian and European masterpieces. The National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame honors the pioneering spirit of women who shaped the American West. You can get to the district by taking the TRE about an hour's ride west of EBJ/Union Station to Fort Worth Central Station, then transferring to Trinity Metro's Orange Line bus.

This is only a small sample of the museums and historic landmarks you can visit in North Texas. You'll find more by clicking here.

DART puts the best of our region's cultural offerings a short ride away. No car, no traffic, no parking expenses. The GoPass® app makes everything even easier. Download it today, and you can plan trips, buy passes, and more.

Texas A&M System Receives Highest Possible Ratings from Nation's Three Major Credit Agencies

BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION, Texas — The Texas A&M University System has received the highest possible credit ratings from the nation's three major credit rating agencies, earning top marks that place the A&M System among an elite group of four universities and university systems nationwide with the highest ratings from all three major agencies.

Fitch Ratings and S&P Global Ratings assigned AAA ratings and stable outlooks to the Board of Regents of The Texas A&M University System's Series 2026A and Series 2026B Permanent University Fund bonds. Moody's Ratings, in its latest credit analysis, lists the A&M System at AAA with a stable outlook.

Moody's summarized the A&M System's position by writing that its "exceptional credit quality" reflects "robust financial reserves and a large and growing scale."

"These ratings are an outside assessment of the strength and discipline of The Texas A&M University System," said Board Chairman Robert L. Albritton.

"The Board's responsibility is to protect the long-term financial strength of this System while making sure Texas has the classrooms, laboratories, research facilities and workforce training capacity it needs. The highest ratings from the nation's major credit agencies show that the A&M System is managing growth responsibly and earning the trust placed in us."

The ratings reflect confidence in the A&M System's financial resources, strong state support, debt management and the strength of the Permanent University Fund, a constitutionally established endowment that supports capital projects for The Texas A&M University System and The University of Texas System.

Fitch assigned an AAA rating to \$358,720,000 in tax-exempt Series 2026A bonds and \$43,325,000 in taxable Series 2026B bonds. Fitch also affirmed its AAA rating on approximately \$1.5 billion in outstanding A&M System PUF bonds and affirmed its F1+ short-term rating on \$300 million

in authorized A&M System PUF commercial paper notes. The rating outlook is stable.

Moody's Ratings cited the A&M System's exceptional credit quality, robust financial reserves, large and growing scale, strong statewide role and support from the State of Texas. Moody's report noted the System's 12 campuses, serving more than 146,000 full-time equivalent students; \$29.4 billion in total cash and investments for fiscal year 2025; and a strong research profile.

"These ratings matter because they help us build for Texas at a lower cost," said Chancellor Glenn Hegar. "They allow the A&M System to move forward with projects that serve students, support research, strengthen our agencies and prepare the workforce our state needs. This is what disciplined growth looks like: strong financial management tied directly to service."

The new PUF bonds will refund outstanding commercial paper and portions of previously issued bonds and to expand academic and research capacity through investments in state-of-the-art computing infrastructure and new educational facilities.

The Permanent University Fund was established by the Texas Constitution in 1876. The A&M System receives one-third of the annual distribution from the Available University Fund, which receives distributions from the Permanent University Fund. Those distributions help finance eligible capital projects across the A&M System.

HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY!

Statepoint Crossword Puzzle
Solution: June 25 - THE 4TH OF JULY

C	L	O	A	K		G	O	P		S	P	E	W		
L	E	T	G	O		N	F	L		P	O	L	I	O	
I	V	I	E	D		U	F	O		A	D	O	R	N	
P	I	C	N	I	C	S		P	A	R	A	D	E		
			T	A	R		T	S	A	R					
A	B	C		K	O	L	A		H	O	G	A	N	S	
L	E	A	F		C	A	I	N		T	A	R	O	T	
E	A	R	L		I	S	L	E	S		G	O	T	O	
P	L	E	A	D		T	E	M	P		A	M	E	N	
H	E	D	G	E	R		N	O	U	N		A	R	E	
					F	O	R	D		T	O	O			
		P	O	T	A	T	O		N	A	T	H	A	N	S
H	O	K	U	M		O	V	A		I	B	S	E	N	
I	N	A	N	E		S	I	P		C	O	C	O	A	
S	T	Y	E			T	E	E		E	Y	I	N	G	

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Continued **Voting** Page 4

consistently pushed this country closer to its democratic ideals, not further from them.

The question before the country now is not whether the Voting Rights Act worked. History already answered that. The real question is whether America still possesses the moral courage to defend the democratic

principles it claims to celebrate.

Because preserving democracy requires more than memorializing the past. It requires confronting the present. And right now, too many institutions remain unwilling to do that.

The opinions expressed in this commentary are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the AFRO.

The post The Voting Rights Act didn't fail—the country abandoned its moral commitment to it appeared first on AFRO American Newspapers.

Based on reporting by Afro-American – Washington.

Originally published by Black Press USA Wire — <https://afro.com/voting-rights-act-threatened-2>

You Had Me at Hello: Love Lessons from Barack and Michelle Obama

By **Birmingham Times**

Source: Black Press USA Wire /The Birmingham Times

Former first lady Michelle Obama delivered a loving and heartfelt tribute to her husband on Thursday at the Obama Presidential Center's grand opening ceremony in Chicago. Her words brought President Barack Obama to tears.

"You told me all those years ago that you couldn't promise me the world, but you could promise me an interesting life," she said, "and of course you outdid yourself and managed to give me both."

Though the lives of Barack and Michelle Obama have been anything but ordinary, their love story teaches everyday lessons valuable to any couple.

How Barack Met Michelle

Long before he became president, Barack Obama was simply a young lawyer trying to convince a smart, ambitious woman named Michelle Robinson to go on a date. The two met in 1989 at the Chicago law firm Sidley & Austin. Michelle was assigned to mentor Barack, who was a summer associate while attending Harvard Law School. Because she was his adviser at the firm, Michelle initially resisted Barack's attempts to date her. But eventually he won her over. For their first date, the couple had lunch at the Art Institute of Chicago and ice cream at a nearby Baskin-Robbins. They walked through the city and later went to see Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*.

Two years after their first date, they got engaged at Gordon's restaurant in Chicago just after Barack passed the bar exam.

Barack and Michelle married on Oct. 3, 1992. Their reception was held at the South Shore Cultural Center. For their honeymoon, they took a trip along the California coast.

They welcomed their first child, Malia, on July 4, 1998. Their second daughter, Sasha, was born on July 10, 2001.

A Strong Support System Barack has shared that he relied heavily on Michelle's judgment and honesty throughout his political career, calling her his closest adviser and toughest critic. Michelle was a strong support system for Barack, even in his earliest political campaigns. During his Illinois State Senate cam-



Photo Credit: **Birmingham Times**

paigns, she was a sounding board and trusted adviser, all while maintaining her own demanding career and family responsibilities.

During Barack's 2008 Presidential Campaign, Michelle traveled extensively, speaking at rallies and campaign events nationwide. Her stories about their family life helped to endear Barack to voters.

During his presidency, Michelle became one of the administration's most popular public figures. Through initiatives such as *Let's Move!*, support for military families, and higher education programs, she helped advance the administration's goals and priorities.

In 2011, in an interview on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, Barack credited Michelle for his success.

"Obviously, I couldn't have done anything that I've done without Michelle," he told Oprah Winfrey. "Not only has she been a great first lady, she is just my rock. I count on her in so many ways every single day."

During Barack Obama's presidency, Michelle Obama became one of the administration's most popular public figures. (*Obama.org*) Friends First

In that same interview, Michelle stressed the importance of a partnership built on mutual respect.

"It has to be a true partnership, and you have to really, really like and respect the person you're married to, because it is a hard road."

Both Barack and Michelle have spoken about the importance of friendship in marriage. "For the past 25 years, you've not only been my wife and the mother of my children, you've been my best friend," President Obama

said during his farewell speech on Jan. 10, 2017 at McCormick Place convention center in Chicago.

Being friends also means having fun and laughing together.

"In our house, we don't take ourselves too seriously, and laughter is the best form of unity, I think, in a marriage," Michelle said in an interview on "Live! With Regis and Kelly" in 2011.

Navigating Tough Times While many see the Obamas as #couplegoals, they've been open about the hardships they've faced over the years and honest about relying on counseling and communication to get through tough times.

In 2022, on the *Revolt x Michelle Obama* special hosted by Angie Martinez, Michelle spoke candidly about the frustrations of early marriage, especially just after their children were born.

"There were 10 years where I couldn't stand my husband," she said. "And guess when it happened? When those kids were little."

She said things improved when she realized "marriage isn't 50-50, ever."

In 2024, while speaking with host Jay Shetty on *On Purpose* podcast, Michelle said she wanted to normalize discussing the "natural, understandable rough patches" in marriages that make people "want to quit."

Learning to forge ahead in the face of challenges is what leads to long-lasting love, she said.

"You don't quit on it, you learn from it," Michelle said. "That's what sustaining a relationship is — it's the choice to figure it out, not quit, when it gets hard."

Sources: Elle.com and

Obama.org

Built to Last: Share Your Love Story

What does lasting love look like? Maybe it's handwritten notes tucked into lunch bags, dancing in the kitchen after a long day, praying together through hard seasons, or simply choosing each other again and again over the years. Whatever your story looks like, we want to hear it.

For years, the Birmingham Times has celebrated local couples and the love that binds them through our popular "You Had Me at Hello" column. Now, we're looking for more inspiring stories of commitment, partnership, laughter, resilience, and romance.

Have you been married seven years or longer? Tell us the secret to your enduring love. No relationship is ordinary, and every couple has a story worth sharing. Your journey could encourage newlyweds, inspire singles, or remind readers that lasting love still exists.

Whether your love story began with a blind date, a high school romance, a chance encounter, or a friendship that grew into forever, we'd love to feature it.

To be considered for a future "You Had Me at Hello" column or to nominate a couple you admire, email editor@birmingham-times.com with the couple's names, contact information, and the number of years they've been married.

Based on reporting by Birmingham Times.

Originally published by Black Press USA Wire — <https://www.birmingham-times.com/2026/06/you-had-me-at-hello-love-lessons-from-barack-and-michelle-obama/>



The MLK Back to School Festival is an annual event for students of all ages and their families to receive free backpacks, school supplies, and other essential items for the new school year.

The festival will take place on Saturday, August 8, 2026, starting at 9 a.m. at the MLK, Jr. Community Center. This is a drive-through event and children must be present to receive items. The limit is 2 fam-

ilies per car and 4 children per family.

You do not have to register to attend or to receive items! Items will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

If you are interested in being a part of the event, you can register as a Community Partner.

For more information, visit www.dallasmlk-center.com/back-to-school.

Fair Park to Host Independence Day Celebration on Friday, July 3

Dallas, Texas — Fair Park will host an Independence Day celebration on Friday, July 3 as part of FIFA Fan Festival Dallas. The event will offer a full day of entertainment, community activities, cultural experiences, and fireworks at one of Dallas' most iconic destinations.

Guests can watch live FIFA matches on big screens, enjoy entertainment, and take part in family-friendly activities. Food and drinks will be available for purchase throughout the day. Several Fair Park museums and attractions will be open. The evening will end with a fireworks show at the Pavilion after the Colombia vs. Ghana match that starts at 8:30 p.m.

Admission is free. Cashless parking is \$30. Visitors must register in advance for a ticket at <https://dallasfwcfestivaltickets.vivenushop.com>

[/event/fan-festival-dallas-7wgit2](https://www.dallasmlk-center.com/back-to-school).

Guests are encouraged to spend the day exploring Fair Park including the African American Museum at Fair Park, the Hall of State, Texas Discovery Gardens, the Children's Aquarium at Fair Park, and The Black Academy of Arts and Letters. Food and drinks are available at Rouso at the Old Mill Inn. Outside food and drinks are not allowed, and coolers, chairs, fireworks, and other prohibited items are not permitted.

No other events are scheduled at Fair Park on July 3 or July 4 outside of FIFA Fan Festival™ Dallas and the fireworks show. The Midway and Cotton Bowl Stadium will be closed to the public. The best place to enjoy the matches, entertainment, and fireworks is inside the FIFA Fan Festival area.

Building understanding through ASL

By Jenna Carpenter

For Nirali Q., learning American Sign Language is personal.

As someone who is hard of hearing, the fourth grader sees herself as someone who can help connect two worlds.

"Most hearing people don't try to communicate with deaf people," Nirali said. "There are two different sides, but I want to be the person who bridges the gap."

This summer, she's building those skills through Dallas ISD's Spark ASL and Multi-Sport

Camp, which combines ASL instruction and lessons about deaf culture with activities such as volleyball, basketball, and swimming.

While athletics keep students active, ASL lessons help students better understand deaf culture and learn about the history and experiences of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

"My favorite thing has been learning about famous deaf people," said third grader Jimena D.

Her favorite is William Hoy, the deaf baseball

player credited with creating many of the hand signals still used in baseball today.

During the camp, students review the alphabet, numbers, colors, and food through games and hands-on activities. One favorite is ASL Telephone, where students sign a message down a line and the final student guesses what was communicated.

Ashley Smith, a second- and third-grade deaf education teacher at K.B. Polk Center for Academically Talented and Gifted, is one

of the camp instructors.

She said introducing students to ASL at a young age helps them become more effective communicators and advocates.

"The ability to learn a language is easier when you're younger," she said. "It helps people with all kinds of communication needs."

Like Nirali, Maiya L., said she wants to learn ASL so she can help create a more inclusive environment for people around her.

"If two people are hav-



Photo Credit: Dallas ISD

ing a conversation, and one is hard of hearing, I can interpret for them," Maiya, a fourth-grader, said.

The month-long camp ended with a showcase, where students presented what they learned in front of their friends and family.

As for the future of the

camp, Smith hopes it continues to grow, and even become an extracurricular on campuses during the school year.

"Deaf people don't view deafness as something to be fixed," she said. They can't learn how to hear, but can learn how to sign."