

Dallas ISD starts on Tuesday, August 11.
“Please observe SCHOOL ZONES SAFETY.”



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VOLUME 78 NUMBER 45

SERVING THE BLACK COMMUNITY WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR SINCE 1947

August 6 - 12, 2026

OP-ED: No More Broken Promises to Black America

By Reverend Dr. Boise Kimber | BlackPressUSA



Photo Credit: : iStockphoto /NNPA.

The AI Boom and the promise of public ownership: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is quickly becoming one of the most powerful forces in the global economy, with the potential to generate historic levels of wealth. As technology companies and governments position themselves to benefit from this growth, our communities must share in those gains in ways that are real, substantial, and

protected from political reversal

At the same time, many communities are pushing back to ensure that new AI infrastructure does not strain local resources, increase costs, or pollute their neighborhoods. Sovereign Wealth Funds and Equity Stakes: the latest promise being offered to the public is the creation of sovereign

Continue OP-ED Page 2

Smokey John's Bar-B-Que Marks 50 Years of Family, Faith and Flavor with Free Dallas Block Party

Founded on a backyard smoker, the Reaves family celebrates five decades with Customer Appreciation Week and a citywide celebration on Aug. 29



“Early Team”

Photo Credit: Smokey John's Bar-B-Que and Home Cooking

DALLAS, TX (July 22, 2026) — Fifty years ago, “Smokey” John Reaves was smoking turkeys and hams in his backyard as thank-you gifts for his roofing and construction clients, stack-

ing the extras in his mother-in-law's bathtub because there was nowhere else to put them. That hobby became Smokey John's Bar-B-Que and Home Cooking, a Dallas institution now led

by his sons, Brent and Juan Reaves. On Saturday, Aug. 29, the family will open its parking lot and dining room at 1820 W. Mockingbird Lane for a free block party marking 50 years in busi-

ness.

The milestone celebration begins with Smokey John's annual Customer Appreciation Week, Aug. 24-29, and builds to the block party from 11 a.m. to

4 p.m. on the 29th. Ten percent of that day's sales will be donated to Helping Hands Open Hearts and Rock Teen Youth Foundation, continuing a tradition of community giving the Reaves family traces directly back to its founder.

“My dad built this business on giving, relationships and connecting with the community,” said Brent Reaves, co-owner of Smokey John's. “Fifty years later, that's still who we are. This block party is us celebrating all of the people who have been a part of us reaching this milestone.”

John Reaves opened his first restaurant, originally called Big John's, at the corner of Lemmon Avenue and Mockingbird Lane in 1976 with his wife, Gloria, and cousin Douglas “Rent” Spraglin. The name changed after smoke from a pit fire filled the building and a customer joked they should call it Smokey John's instead. In the late 1970s, Dallas Cowboys stars Drew Pearson and Harvey Martin invested in the restaurant, helping expand the concept across Texas and giving it a national spotlight when Martin

plugged “the best barbecue in town” during ABC's Super teams broadcast weeks after Super Bowl XII.

The business weathered real setbacks along the way, including a bankruptcy in the 1980s and a 2017 kitchen fire that shut the restaurant down for 16 months. Each time, the family rebuilt around what mattered most: faith, family and feeding people well. Brent and Juan Reaves took full ownership in 2013 and have since grown Smokey John's into a restaurant, a major catering operation and one of the longest-standing black-owned vendors at the State Fair of Texas, where its six booths serve tens of thousands of turkey legs, brisket, ribs and tamales each fall. The family's 50-year-old rub recipe is now also sold at H-E-B stores across Texas.

“Over the years we've learned that hospitality transcends cultures. Dad has always sold good food, but we have learned he was really in the people business,” said Juan Reaves, co-owner of Smokey John's. “Fifty years in, we're not

Continue Party Page 2

Most Black Texas voters back Talarico over Paxton, poll finds, despite Senate primary tensions

Iejandro Serrano, The Texas Tribune



U.S. Senate candidate James Talarico speaks during a town hall meeting at Kingdom Builders Center in Houston on July 19, 2026.

Photo Credit: Annie Mulligan for The Texas Tribune

Fewer than one in 10 Black voters in Texas say they are less likely to vote in November's midterm elections due to U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett's defeat in the Democratic primary, according to a poll released Tuesday that suggests James Talarico could face limited electoral fallout from the racial tensions that have persisted since he secured the U.S. Senate nomination.

The survey of 500 Black Texans who voted in recent elections, fielded by Texas

Southern University, provides a temperature check of the crucial voter bloc as Talarico continues efforts to coalesce Black Democrats behind his candidacy.

While numerous Black political leaders have backed Talarico, some elected officials and activists have said he, and the Democratic Party as a whole, have to do more to mobilize voters and listen to their worries. Those calls have fallen largely on

Continue Poll Page 2



Recognizing #BLACK EXCELLENCE for 78 Years



Continued Page 1

Smokey John's Bar-B-Que Marks 50 Years of Family, Faith and Flavor with Free Dallas Block Party

just serving barbecue — we’re carrying our father’s legacy for-

ward, solidifying our mission to nourish the community through the

joy of food, the strength of faith and the spirit of family.

Food, Faith, Family that’s what we’re all about.”



“Smokey John’s Family”
Photo Credit: **Smokey John’s Bar-B-Que and Home Cooking**

50th Anniversary Block Party Details

The Aug. 29 celebration will run from 11 am to 4 pm and feature a performance by the **Bishop Dunne Band**, opening remarks from **Brent** and **Juan Reaves**, photo opportunities with local celebrities, vendor giveaways and activations, a DJ, face painting and a live musical performance. The day’s centerpiece is the unveiling of a newly commissioned portrait honoring the “**Pillars of Smokey John’s**” — **founder John Reaves**, his **late wife Gloria Reaves**, **Douglas “Rent” Spraglin** and **Ruth Hauntz** — followed by a sweet tea toast to the restaurant’s next 50 years.

The block party is presented by **Frost Bank** with support from the **Mark Cuban Heroes Center** and the **Dallas Stars Foundation**, alongside local vendors including **Cookie Society**, **Mama Moore’s Popcorn**, **Mr. Sugar Rush**, **Jewels Kombucha** and **Tish’s Treasures**. A portion of the day’s proceeds will benefit *Helping Hands Open Hearts, which supports seniors with food and everyday necessities, and the Rock Teen Youth Foundation*, which promotes positive life choices, leadership, and education. *The event is free and open to the public*; the restaurant remains open for regular service until 7 p.m.

Houston mothers challenge Ten Commandments posters under Texas’ new parental rights amendment

Ellie Ashby, The Texas Tribune

Three Houston mothers are suing to stop displaying the Ten Commandments in Texas public school classrooms, arguing that it violates the state’s religious freedom law and a voter-approved parental rights amendment.

Emily Roth, one of the plaintiffs, said in a Friday morning press release that the Ten Commandments poster purposefully ignores religious differences in the classroom and will make students feel like they do not belong.

Their lawsuit is the latest challenge to Senate Bill 10 — this time under Texas law. Other attempts to prohibit the display of the Ten Commandments in public schools under federal law — primarily the First Amendment’s guarantee of separation of church and state — have been unsuccessful so far.

The mothers’ suit, filed in Harris County, demands that the displays be taken down and that the court act before mid-August, when the school year begins.

“It teaches students, and their teachers, that exclusion is acceptable, maybe even preferred. That is not a lesson I want my children learning from the state of Texas,” she said.

The parents are suing under the Texas Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which the Legislature passed in 1999 and declares that “a government agency may not substantially burden a person’s free exercise of religion.”

They are also suing

Continue **Rights** Page 3

Continued **Poll** Page 1

Talarico, however, after he defeated Crockett, one of the state’s most prominent Black politicians, in a contentious primary that was fraught with racial issues and saw Black voters overwhelmingly back Crockett. The poll found that Crockett’s defeat left just 7% of Black Texans less likely to show up in November, while an accompanying TSU survey found that 79% of likely Black voters intend to vote for Talarico, compared to 12% who sup-

ported Republican U.S. Senate nominee Ken Paxton, the attorney general. The findings suggest that many Black voters appear to be sticking with Talarico even as an overwhelming majority — 77% of recent Black voters — said they believe the Democratic Party in Texas takes Black voters “for granted.” Eight in 10 also said they believed Crockett’s race influenced the decision by non-Black primary voters to support Talarico.

Pollsters at TSU’s Barbara Jordan Public Policy

Research and Survey Center conducted both surveys starting July 27. The poll that surveyed a representative sample of the likely statewide electorate was in the field through Thursday and had a +/- 2.8% margin of error, while the one that focused on recent Black voters was conducted through Sunday and had a 4.4% margin of error. Respondents to the latter poll had voted in at least one election since the November 2022 midterms.

In the poll of statewide voters across all demo-

graphics, Talarico received 47% to Paxton’s 45%, continuing a stretch of surveys showing the Democrat with narrow leads within the margin of error. Republicans led by single digits in all other statewide races in the survey, with GOP Railroad Commissioner nominee Bo French leading by the narrowest margin at 3 points.

Crockett endorsed Talarico the day after losing the March 3 primary, which came after some polls showed Talarico winning less than 10% of

Black voters who were likely to vote in the contest. She has since cast doubt on whether Black voters have unified behind the statewide ticket, skipped the Democrats’ state convention and said she is focusing her efforts on down-ballot races. Crockett’s supporters, meanwhile, have urged Talarico to do more to rein in his supporters who have demanded that the Dallas congresswoman play a more active role in supporting her former rival — tension that has played out

largely online.

Talarico recently vowed to invest \$25 million in Black voter outreach, announcing the initiative during an event in Houston that was intended to serve as a forum to listen to Black voters’ priorities, and that grew tense at times. At the Texas Democratic Party’s convention in June, he told a room packed for a Black Democratic Caucus meeting that the party had a “troubling history of taking Black

Continue **Poll** Page 4

Continued **OP-ED** Page 1

wealth funds or similar ownership models that would give people a stake in AI-generated wealth.

Several proposals point in this direction: • President Donald Trump has explored strategies for the U.S. government to take equity stakes in leading AI firms. • Senator Bernie Sanders has introduced legislation aimed at giving the public a share in this new economic value. • OpenAI has proposed a voluntary “Public Wealth Fund” that would give American citizens a direct stake in the gains created by artificial intelligence. The question is whether these proposals represent real economic inclusion—or another version of a familiar promise that never fully reaches Black America because of broken promises such as the 40 Acres and a Mule broken promises from government and business are not new to Black Americans.

The history of slavery, emancipation, and Recon-

struction shows a repeated pattern: Black labor created wealth, but Black people were denied equal compensation, legal protection, and the resources needed to build generational wealth. Near the end of the Civil War, Union General William Tecumseh Sherman and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton met with 20 Black leaders in Savannah, Georgia. Those leaders made clear that true freedom and self-determination required land ownership. Sherman’s Special Field Order No. 15 set aside 400,000 acres of confiscated Confederate land and granted enslaved families plots of up to 40 acres.

After Lincoln’s assassination, however, President Andrew Johnson reversed course, pardoned former Confederates, and returned the land to its previous owners. Unpaid labor and unequal compensation from 1619 to 1865 were allocated to former enslaved Africans and their descendants who had labored from sunup to sundown without wages,

building wealth for enslavers and for the governments and institutions that supported the enslavement economy.

During much of the Civil War, the Militia Act of 1862 allowed Black soldiers to be paid less than white soldiers. Black soldiers received \$10 per month, with \$3 deducted for clothing, leaving only \$7 in take-home pay. White soldiers received \$13 per month with no clothing deduction.

Congress did not correct this inequity for two years. The reality was that “Emancipation” without economic justice and equality was the order of that period of American history, and in April 1862, eight months before President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, Congress passed the District of Columbia Emancipation Act. The law freed roughly 3,000 Black people, but its benefits were unequal: enslavers received compensation of up to \$300 per

Continue **OP-ED** Page 5

Teddy’s Creation

(Answer Key on Page 8)

☆

= SUDOKU =

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Fill in the missing numbers 1-9.

5		7		1		3		8
	8		3		2		9	
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3			5				7	
	2	8		7		1		3
				2	9			6
8		5			3			1
	1		9				3	
7		3		8		9		2

RELIGIOUS/NEWS

The Apostle John’s Vision of the Heavenly Throne

Revelation 4:1-11



Rev. Johnny Calvin Smith

In Revelation 4:1, the Apostle John is privileged to have a wonderful vision of the Heavenly Throne after he had heard Christ’s powerful messages to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor. Prior to hearing Christ’s stupendous messages to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor, he had witnessed Christ in His exaltation in Revelation 1:12-16. As stated previously in our study of this spectacular book, in the outline seen in Revelation 1:19, John was instructed to write about: “things he hath seen (past, chapter 1); and the things which are (present, chapters 2-3); and the things which shall be hereafter (future, chapters 4-22).

Chapter 4 signals the beginning of “things which shall be hereafter – those things which shall occur after the church age. In verses 1-3, the Apostle John is invited to “Come up hither,” as he received a glimpse of the

heavenly throne before he witnesses the horrible judgments to be poured out on the earth. Actually, events that take place on earth, have their origin in heaven. The heavenly ascent is not unexpected. A true insight into history is only gained when we properly gain a heavenly perspective. In verses 2-3, once the door of heaven was opened to the Apostle John, he was “immediately” in the Spirit. “Experientially he was taken up to heaven though his body was actually still on the island of Patmos” (Walvord and Zuck, eds., The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Victor). Like a few others in the Bible (1 Kings 22:19; Isaiah 6:1; Daniel 7:9), John was privileged to view the heavenly throne. The One seated on the throne is the Lord God Almighty (Revelation 4:8). The Lord God Almighty is described in terms of two precious stones – jasper (clear as crystal) and sardine

(blood red). Also, verse 3 describes a rainbow that completely encircles the throne of God. The encircled rainbow describes the complete faithfulness of God!

Having viewed the heavenly throne in verses 1-3, John gives us a glimpse of the heavenly worship that takes place in heaven (vv. 4-11). Surrounding the throne were twenty-four elders, who were dressed in white with gold crowns on their heads. There are varied interpretations as to who these twenty-four elders were. In reading the various interpretations, it seems best to interpret these elders as representatives of redeemed human beings around the throne who offered their worship to God (Revelation 5:8; 11:16; 19:14). There are indeed many redeemed human beings around the throne of God, but the twenty-four elders represent all the redeemed! From this impressive scene, there pro-

ceeded from the throne lightnings, thunderings, and voices (v. 5). Also, the Apostle John witnessed seven blazing lamps which are the seven Spirits of God (symbolical of the Holy Spirit’s fullness (Isaiah 11:2-3; Zechariah 4:1-6; Revelation 1:4; 3:1).

In verses 6-8, the Apostle John describes a sea of glass, clear as crystal; in addition, he mentions four living creatures, and their likenesses were as a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle. Each of the creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around. The four beasts probably represent angelic beings (seraphim). These living creatures (angels) are “full of eyes,” which indicates their ability to see in all directions, perhaps symbolizing the omniscience of God (II Chronicles 16:9; Zechariah 4:10). In verse 7, John’s vision of these four beasts was similar to Eze-

kiel’s vision in Ezekiel 1:5, 10. These angelic beings had likenesses as unto a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle. These living creatures (angels) are engaged in ceaseless praise to God (v. 8). As the four beasts offered their praise to God, it was a signal for the twenty-four elders to do the same.

Our God deserves continual “glory, honor and thanks (v. 9). The twenty-four elders are perpetually prostrating themselves before God and laying down their crowns as a sign of their homage. They cast their crowns as an acknowledgment of God’s Sovereignty! They cast their crown before Eternal God, One who “liveth for ever and ever.” Ascribing glory, honor, and power to God is appropriate, for He created all things and we were created to render praise to our majestic Lord (v. 11).

“May God Bless!”

CONTINUED RIGHTS PAGE 2



Photo Credit: **Lorianne Willett/The Texas Tribune**

under the recently approved Texas Proposition 15 — also known as the “Parental Rights Amendment” — which ensures parents have the right “to exercise care, custody, and control of the parent’s child, including the right to make decisions concerning the child’s upbringing.”

Last year’s Senate Bill 10 requires Texas classrooms to display donated posters of the King James Version of the Ten Commandments. The posters must be visible in the classroom and cannot be smaller than 16 by 20 inches.

However, various faiths — such as Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant traditions — number and word the commandments differently, the press release noted.

Sixteen families sued 11 school districts to block the new law in July 2025. They argued that it violates the separation of church and state and pressures students to embrace religious principles and

values they may not align with.

In August 2025, U.S. District Judge Fred Biery blocked the law in the targeted districts.

A ruling by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals this spring then permitted the enforcement of Senate Bill 10, stating that the Texas law did not violate the Constitution. The court also cleared the way for a similar law in Louisiana.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has long argued that the Ten Commandments are an important part of the heritage and history of the United States. Lawyers with his office have argued that the posters — because they

are displayed rather than taught — do not qualify as coercive, as students are allowed to ignore them.

This lawsuit comes less than two months after the Texas Board of Education approved a new Bible-infused curriculum for public schools.

The three mothers suing in Houston are Roth, Audrey Rosa Nath and Sanjam Kaur Sohal.

Roth is raising her children without religion; Nath is raising her children across a variety of religious traditions found in her family, including Jainism, Hinduism, Judaism, and Quakerism; Sohal is Sikh, according to the press release.

Megan Hassan, lead counsel for the plaintiffs, said that despite the women’s different religious beliefs they all want the same thing: “for their children to attend school without being compelled to display a message that conflicts with their faith.”

“They did not want a legal battle with the state of Texas,” she said. “They wanted a poster removed from a classroom wall. That should never have required a lawsuit.”

This story is published through a collaboration between The Texas Tribune and Religion News Service.

~ THEME: HISTORY 101 (Solution will appear in August 13 edition)

- ACROSS
1. Charlie "Bird" Parker's sax

5. Mary ____, businesswoman extraordinaire

8. Downloadable smartphone purchase

11. In ____ of

12. Greek salad staple

13. Appraisal

15. Law school prerequisite, acr.

16. "Once ____ a Time in America"

17. Dietum, pl.

18. * ____ press, Johannes Gutenberg's invention

20. "Sittin' On the Dock of the Bay" singer

21. In need of a muffler

22. Make a choice

23. *Genghis Khan's ____ Empire

26. Intima, pl.

30. Fertility clinic stock

31. Tranquil

34. Famous Steeler coach, Chuck ____

35. Twisted cotton thread

37. Key next to spacebar

38. Like a gymnast

39. Naysayer's favorite prefix

40. Develop, as in story

42. ____-AFTRA

43. Famous fox of fable

45. Like a smell of soil

47. *World's first 24-hour TV news network, acr.

48. Molten rock

50. Smoke plus fog

52. *First Roman emperor

55. Part of foot, pl.

56. Chowder protein

57. Pelvic parts

59. Are not

60. *Homesteader's purchase, sing.

61. " ____ the good die young"

62. *Pres. during the Cuban Missile Crisis

63. It is

64. Fermented rice brew
- DOWN
1. Pledge of Allegiance ending

2. Talk like Daffy

3. Eye drop

4. Day trip

5. Flat-topped military caps

6. Lack of muscle tension

7. Opposite of yin

8. Mushroom spore sacs

9. Benatar and Morita, e.g.

10. Money in Myanmar

12. Pointless

13. Take as one's own

14. * ____ Bull, Lakota's famous leader

19. Gallows' rope

22. *World War ____, 1914-18

23. Wisdom tooth, e.g.

24. Sheep-like

25. Highly unpleasant

26. "He's Just Not That ____ You"

27. Damp

28. Islam's Supreme Being

29. Lament for the dead

32. Writer Ayn

33. Rudolph's friend Hermey, e.g.

36. *One of Mount Rushmore presidents

38. *First President in the White House

40. Cremation ashes container

41. Peanut or pea, e.g.

44. Emotional turmoil

46. 2:1 and 3:1, e.g.

48. Defraud

49. Petri dish jellies

50. Feudal lord's servant

51. Humble and docile

52. Frozen bowl berry

53. Arm bone

54. *The ____ Road, ancient East-West trade route

55. Pilgrimage to Mecca

58. Pirate's "yes"

Statepoint Crossword Puzzle Theme: HISTORY 101

CROSSWORD														
1	2	3	4			5	6	7			8	9	10	
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8	3	1	6	4	9	5	2	7
9	2	4	5	8	7	3	1	6
2	6	7	9	5	4	1	3	8
1	9	5	8	6	3	2	7	4
4	8	3	7	2	1	9	6	5

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

The Dallas Post Tribune

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and

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Game #	Game Name / Odds	\$	Official Close of Game	End Validations Date
2723	Lucky 7s Tripler Overall Odds are 1 in 4.26	\$5	8/7/26	2/3/27
2637	\$50, \$100 OR \$500! Overall Odds are 1 in 9.43	\$10	9/2/26	3/1/27
2609	\$100, \$200, \$500 OR \$1,000! Overall Odds are 1 in 9.49	\$20	9/2/26	3/1/27
2622	Lucky No. 7 Overall Odds are 1 in 4.33	\$2	9/16/26	3/15/27
2656	Crazy 8s Overall Odds are 1 in 3.99	\$2	9/16/26	3/15/27
2683	Emerald 7s Overall Odds are 1 in 4.23	\$5	9/16/26	3/15/27
2720	Chameleon Cash Overall Odds are 1 in 4.18	\$5	9/16/26	3/15/27
2705	Lucky Match Overall Odds are 1 in 3.62	\$10	9/16/26	3/15/27
2685	Diamond 7s Overall Odds are 1 in 3.51	\$20	9/16/26	3/15/27
2589	500X Overall Odds are 1 in 3.36	\$50	9/16/26	3/15/27

Texaslottery.com

is the official source for all pertinent game information. Game closing procedures may be initiated for documented business reasons. These games may have prizes unclaimed, including top prizes. In addition, game closing procedures will be initiated when all top prizes have been claimed. During closing, games may be sold even after all top prizes have been claimed. Must be 18 or older to purchase a ticket. PLAY RESPONSIBLY. For help with a gambling problem, ncpgambling.org. © 2026 Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.



JOB POSTING



Ed Bell Construction Company
An Equal Opportunity Employer

August 1, 2026

Ed Bell Construction is a Dallas based heavy highway contractor doing business in the North Texas market since 1963. With clients such as TxDOT, Dallas County Public Works, and the Cities of Dallas, Fort Worth, Richardson, and Mansfield (plus many others), we have a strong backlog of work in the highway market locally.

We are currently hiring for the following positions:

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- Dozer Operator (Earthwork)
- Roller Operator (Earthwork)
- Mixer Operator (Earthwork)
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- Batch Plant Operator (Paving)
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Quinn Minute

Stock Show

By Rix Quinn

Imagine yourself in a sea of cows, surrounded by thousands of pounds of beef.

That’s how I feel when I go to one of our state’s stock shows, which attracts thousands of visitors.

Farmers and ranchers spend several days showing off animals that have taken months or years to raise.

I am a city boy. However, I have been to a farm, and I once owned

two rabbits, a goldfish, and a chicken with irritable bowel. But I don’t really know animal habits.

That’s why I love the stock show. And up until recently, I didn’t know there were so many cattle breeds.

Then I found out somebody could breed cattle to improve the strength of both breeds. That also explains why I shouldn’t marry my cousin.

While at these shows, I walked around to see eight major hog breeds and 50 to 70 chicken types.

But my favorite was the rabbit barn, which housed nearly 50 breeds.

One day on a high school field trip, we visited the cattle exhibit. One of the demonstrations was a machine that could milk several cows simultaneously.

A rowdy classmate noticed one machine wasn’t

hooked up, so he stuck a finger in the milker. It grabbed him and would not let go.

One of the workers heard him yell and jumped in to save the boy. Luckily, he escaped with only a swollen finger, a verbal scolding from the field trip sponsor, and a lifelong respect for milking technology.

But for him, it was a terrible scare. And it could have been an udder disaster.

August is National Black Business Month

Recognizing #BLACK EXCELLENCE for 78 Years

NEWS

Continued Poll Page 2

voters for granted,” which received emphatic applause.

Among the critics of Talarico’s outreach to Black Texans is state Rep. Jolanda Jones, a Houston Democrat who has accused him of being “unwilling” to reach out to her directly and “have a substantive conversation” about earning the community’s support. Last month, Talarico held a 75-minute Zoom call with Black elected officials, including Jones, according to state Rep. Barbara Gervin-Hawkins, D-San Antonio and chair of the Texas Legislative Black Caucus.

<link rel="canonical" href="https://www.texas-tribune.org/2026/08/04/texas-senate-race-black-voters-james-talarico-ken-paxton-jasmine-crockett/" />

This article first appeared on The Texas Tribune.

VOTE

7 Day Weather Forecast for DFW

Thursday, Aug. 6	Friday, Aug. 7	Saturday, Aug. 8	Sunday, Aug. 9	Monday, Aug. 10	Tuesday, Aug. 11	Wednesday, Aug. 12
 H -97° L -82°	 H 98° L -82°	 H -98° L -81°	 H 98° L -81°	 H -96° L -83*	 H - 99° L - 82°	 H -99° L -82°

MUSIC



Bobby Ross Avila: Meet the Man Behind Usher’s Most Noteworthy Performances

By **Javacia Harris Bowser** | The Birmingham Times
Source: Black Press USA Wire

If you enjoyed the setlist and storytelling elements in Usher’s performances during the R&B Tour with Chris Brown, musical producer Bobby Ross Avila is one of the people you should thank. In fact, if you thought Usher’s Super Bowl Halftime Show performance in 2024 was top-tier or if “Confessions” is your favorite Usher album, you owe Avila gratitude for those too.

With decades of experience as a Grammy Award-winning producer, songwriter, performer, and multi-instrumentalist, Bobby Ross Avila serves as the musical producer for Usher’s performances on the current stadium tour featuring Usher and Chris Brown. The R&B Tour made its way to Birmingham’s Protective Stadium for two nights of performances, July 28 and 29.

The Birmingham Times spoke with Avila about the tour, his storied career, and his work on the R&B Tour before the Tuesday night show.

Over his decades in the music industry, Avila has collaborated with legendary producers Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, alongside his brother IZ Avila, and has helped create music for iconic artists such as Janet Jackson, Mary J. Blige, Chaka Khan, Anthony Hamilton, Earth, Wind & Fire and many others.

And all that experience is infused into his work on the R&B Tour. In addition to his behind-the-scenes role, Avila performs live each night as a member of Usher’s band, including a featured solo during the show.

But Avila is quick to acknowledge that each show is a team effort.

“I’m one of many things that make it work, just one component,” he told the Birmingham Times. “I work alongside my brother IZ Avila, who’s the other half of the Avila Brothers, and there’s another guy, Jamel. Then you’ve got

choreography and security, and it all works together. It’s like a ballet. It’s really a dance with rhythm that we’re doing together to make this visual experience be what it is every night.”

The R&B Tour

The Usher and Chris Brown tour brings together generations of R&B fans, so the shows must speak to a wide range of audiences while also celebrating the music, culture, and legacy of the genre. Avila says the key is to incorporate the audience and include captivating storytelling elements.

“It really invites everybody to the party,” he said.

As a musical producer, Avila, along with the rest of the team, is charged with finding a way to present fan favorites that feels both fresh and familiar.

“It’s like, how do we reinvent ourselves again after 20 years?” he said. “How do we do ‘Bad Girl’ different? How do we do ‘Seduction’ different? But, you know, that’s the fun part about it.”

One of the highlights of working with Usher, Avila said, is witnessing his dedication to his craft.

“He’s such a student,” he said. “One thing that I love about Ush is he loves music, and he knows who came before him. His understanding and appreciation of music is very fulfilling for me and my brother.”

For Avila, working on the R&B Tour also brought an opportunity to collaborate with Chris Brown’s team.

“There’s like so many similarities [between Usher and Chris Brown], but when you see them on stage, you see how extremely different they are,” Avila said, pointing out Brown’s non-stop energy and adding that Brown seems like a “superhero” when he performs.

Meanwhile, he said Usher’s focus is on finesse, and the impact of great artists such as James Brown,

Michael Jackson, and Fred Astaire is evident when Usher is on stage.

“I think Ush has this very sophisticated, fresh, and just as explosive way of performing,” he said. “They’re both really sharp and eloquent in their own right.”

After decades of shaping music behind the scenes, Bobby Ross Avila is stepping forward as a solo artist again with his latest project, “The Return of the Gentleman.” (Provided) “I didn’t find music. Music found me.” Avila grew up playing music with his family and had landed his first record deal by age 12.

“I didn’t find music. Music found me,” he said.

When he was 15, Avila started working with Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. But being an artist is challenging.

“The music business took me on a journey and goes through the ups and the downs and the rejections,” he said. Along the way, however, he was learning about branding, marketing, promotions, and publicity, which sparked an interest in producing.

“At a certain point in my life, my brother and I decided to partner as a production duo, and that led us to reuniting with Jimmy and Terry in 2001,” he said. The following year, they met Usher and worked on the song “Truth Hurts.”

“And next thing you know, we’re doing six or seven songs on what was going to be called “Confessions,” he said.

And the rest is history — literally. The Avila brothers continued working with Usher over the years and, in 2024, became the first Mexican Americans to produce the Super Bowl Halftime Show. Their work contributed to one of the most-watched and celebrated halftime performances in history and marked a significant cultural and professional milestone for

Continue **Music** Page 6

Know Your Rights and Consumer Protections as the Texas Summer Heats Up

AUSTIN, Texas – With summer heat firmly in place across Texas, the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) is reminding Texans about consumer protections to help keep their electricity service connected during extreme heat. These protections include safeguards against disconnection due to financial hardship or extreme weather emergencies, as well as access to bill payment assistance.

“It’s hard to stay cool in the Texas summer heat, and that’s especially true for Texans facing financial challenges,” said PUCT Executive Director Connie Corona. “Our rules help ensure Texans have the power they need to stay safe during extreme summer heat while they work to pay their electric bills without

risking disconnection.”

PUCT rules prohibit electric service disconnections for non-payment during extreme weather emergencies, including periods of extreme heat. Retail electric providers (REPs) also must offer deferred payment plans for bills that become due during an extreme weather emergency. The PUCT’s definition of an extreme weather emergency follows National Weather Service advisory criteria outlined in Chapter 25, Sections 25.29(i) and 25.483.

Consumers experiencing financial difficulties related to higher-than-normal energy bills should contact their electric provider to learn about available assistance options. Texans can also call 2-1-1 for information about programs available in their area.

The PUCT also provides additional protections for consumers who are ill or disabled and have documented that a service disconnection would cause illness or worsen an existing medical condition. More information is available on the PUCT’s Know Your Rights webpage.

In addition, the PUCT’s Consumer Protection Division works with Texans to help resolve utility service issues. Consumers should first contact their electric provider. If the issue cannot be resolved, they may contact the Consumer Protection Division by emailing consumer@puc.texas.gov or calling 1-888-782-8477.

For energy-saving tips and to comparison shop for retail electric plans, visit the PUCT’s Power to Choose website



Continued **OP-ED** Page 2

enslaved person, while the people who had labored without pay received nothing unless they agreed to relocate outside the United States, where they would get \$100.

The 13th Amendment, ratified in 1865, abolished slavery in the United States but preserved a loophole by allowing involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime. Former slaveholding states exploited that exception through Black Codes, convict leasing, and Jim Crow laws, using the criminal legal system to restrict Black freedom and to preserve economic control and wealth by former enslavement masters.

These broken promises symbolize the federal government's failure to provide foundational reparations and economic justice to Black Americans. They represent the systemic hurdles that de-

scendants of enslaved people have navigated as they struggle to build generational wealth in the United States. Today we are facing another threat to Black American economic progress.

President Trump, the Republicans, and the Supreme Court are rolling back all the gains made by our people over the last 162 years. Quality education is being dismantled. Racist gerrymandering disguised as equal opportunity is eliminating Black congressional districts. Civil Rights are being stripped of their ability to protect Blacks. A massive tax burden is being shifted from the rich to the poor.

Given this record, it is reasonable to question whether the federal government and its technology partners will truly protect Black interests in the next wave of AI-driven wealth. Senator Bernie Sanders is right to argue that artificial intelligence is built on “the

collective knowledge of humanity and the creative work of tens of millions of people.” He also correctly warns that the public should have a say in how AI develops so that its benefits serve humanity, not only the wealthiest people on the planet.

However, his current legislative proposal falls short of providing true equality or meaningful economic opportunity for everyday Americans. Sanders estimates that the average payment would be \$1,000 per person before taxes. Measured against the 1862 purchasing power offered to relocating slaves, the only time in American history when the DC Blacks were offered reparations, that amount would equal only about \$33. Meanwhile, the data, knowledge, and creative work of ordinary people are helping create new billionaires and trillionaires.

Continue **OP-ED** Page 6



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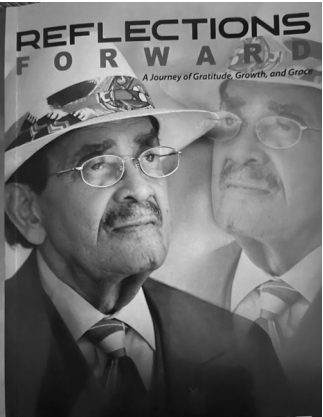
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EDITORIAL PAGE

Remembering:
The Masterful

By Ronald E. Jones
Email: RevJones617@gmail.com



Ronald E. Jones

When you hear the word reflection, it calls to mind deep thoughts. A pause to consider past experiences, actions, and ideas in order to gain new wisdom for the journey ahead. In Reflections Forward, A Journey of Gratitude, Growth and Grace, Ronald E. Jones shares life lessons gathered from more than eight decades of faith, service and resilience. Drawing from his experiences in pastoring, parenting and politics, Rev. Jones offers readers timeless insights to help guide their own paths forward.

A true history maker, Jones became the first African American Mayor of Garland, Texas, and the first city employee to rise through the ranks to earn that distinguished honor. His story is one of perseverance, leadership, and vision...which is proof that success is possible no matter the road you take in life.

But even after a lifetime of achievement, Jones faced one of his greatest challenges when a serious medical condition left him in intensive care for 179 days. Many believed he would not survive. Yet through unwavering faith, the tireless devotion of his wife Peggy and the power of prayer, he discovered light even in life's darkest valleys.

ORDER Now.... A copy of this masterpiece will encourage you not to look back, but to press forward with confidence that God's plan for your life is greater than anything.

Esterdavis2000@gmail.com

The Divine Nine Sets the Bar High for Civic Engagement

By James B. Ewers Jr., Ed.



Dr. James Ewers

I have been a member of a Divine Nine fraternity for a very long time. To be clear, it has been over fifty years since I crossed the burning sands. I have some great memories of my undergraduate days and made some lasting friendships.

Both fraternities and sororities bring strangers together, and you make unbreakable bonds. The brotherhood and sisterhood circles are everlasting and, in fact, grow. While we hear about their worldwide reach, we can't really grasp the magnitude of it. It is because we are on a college campus and we just see the brothers and sisters around us. At least that was my experience when I was in undergraduate school.

It was only when I moved to another region in the country that I realized the reach of my fraternity. Wearing my fraternity colors gave me instant recognition with complete strangers. I can't tell you how many times I was stopped for instant conversations and fellowship.

Now, it is also being a friend on social media. Ideas, contacts and potential employment positions are shared, too. The network is both inspiring and empowering.

I am a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. It was founded in 1906 at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. I pledged at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The Divine Nine has always had a strong commitment to civic and community engagement. Giving scholarships, providing mentorship programs, and sponsoring leadership programs are only a few of these initiatives.

The organization has also partnered with other like-minded groups to bring hope and encouragement to people. The mission of helping and assisting has never been compromised or negotiated.

We will not accept another symbolic promise of "40 acres and a mule" from the federal government or the technology industry.

If AI is going to generate historic levels of wealth, then the benefits must be real, substantial, and protected from political reversal. That means any new public-wealth proposal must include:

- Substantial investment in Black communities.
- Clear guarantees that promised benefits cannot be easily reversed by a future administration.
- Accountability from both government leaders and technology companies.

As President of the 7-million-member National Black Convention, USA, I intend to help ensure that new achievable and financially sustainable promises are not only made but kept.

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PETER D. DENA SILBERMAN

Continued OP-ED Page 5

This small payment does not address the deeper question: who should own and benefit from the wealth AI generates? No more empty promises to Black American communities should be expected.

Continued Music Page 5

Avila, who expressed great gratitude to Usher. "I truly love him for his belief in what I do, and his belief in what my brother does, and what we do together," he said, adding that he feels the Avila Brothers and Usher are as inseparable as Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis were once with Janet Jackson.

Lucky Fella

After decades of shaping music behind the scenes, Avila is stepping forward as a solo artist again with his latest project, "The Return of the Gentleman."

"I really believe that the new sexy is just being

Continued OP-ED Page 5

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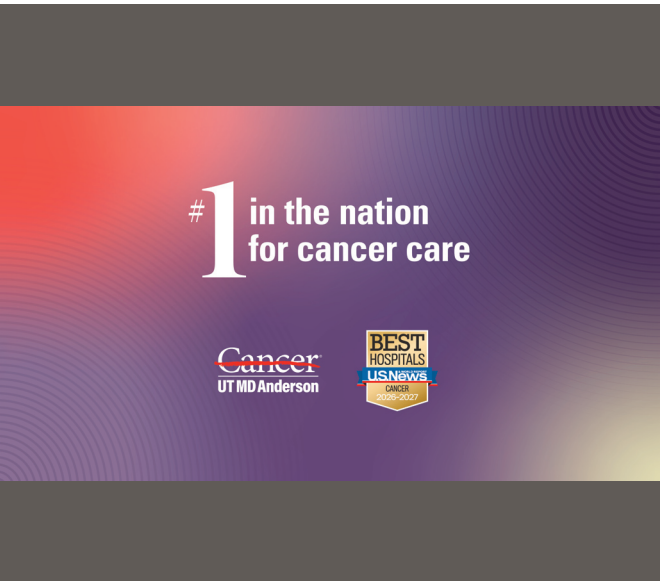
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HOUSTON, AUGUST 3, 2026 — The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center today was named No. 1 in the nation for cancer care in U.S. News & World Report’s 2026-2027 “Best Hospitals” survey. The institution has maintained the top ranking for the past 12 years and has been one of the top two hospitals in the nation for cancer care since the inaugural survey was published in 1990.

“This ranking is a tremendous honor, and it reflects our unwavering commitment to continue making progress in our mission to end cancer,”

said Peter WT Pisters, M.D., president of UT MD Anderson. “We are deeply grateful to everyone who made this recognition possible: our faculty and staff, volunteers, donors, and the patients and families we are honored to serve.”

The institution also earned national rankings in two adult specialties among all U.S. hospitals: No. 6 in Urology and No. 16 in Gastroenterology & GI Surgery. It received High Performing ratings, the highest rating available, in six common adult procedures and conditions: colon cancer surgery; ear nose and throat surgery;

gynecological cancer surgery; leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma treatment; lung cancer surgery; and prostate cancer surgery.

UT MD Anderson has been Making Cancer History® for nearly 85 years, remaining devoted to its mission to eliminate cancer in Texas, across the nation and around the world. As a global leader in oncology, the institution advances its mission through exceptional cancer patient care, research, education and prevention.

In addition to its No. 1 ranking for cancer care by U.S. News & World Re-

port, UT MD Anderson maintained a five-star rating in Vizient’s 2025 rankings and achieved its highest overall ranking to-date, No. 6, which recognizes the institution’s ability to deliver high-quality care across its continuum of health care services. UT MD Anderson also ranks among the world’s best in nursing, as demonstrated through its sixth consecutive Magnet designation and its first Magnet Recognition with Distinction, awarded in 2025 by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Magnet Rec-

ognition program.

Over the past fiscal year, more than 197,000 patients received care at UT MD Anderson. More than 10,600 of them enrolled in over 1,500 clinical trials that make up the world’s largest cancer clinical trials program. Additionally, over 70% of all cancer drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration last fiscal year were tested at UT MD Anderson.

In November 2025, the institution also launched a \$2.5 billion philanthropic campaign, Only Possible Here, The Campaign to End Cancer. This cam-

paign, which represents the largest fundraising effort in UT MD Anderson’s history, has already raised \$2.14 billion for strategic priorities that advance its mission.

“These incredible accomplishments and national recognitions highlight the tireless work of so many team members, collaborators and supporters, who make this level of outstanding care possible,” Pisters said. “We remain steadfast in that work, as we strive to move closer to a future without cancer for every patient and family member affected by this disease.”

ACLU of Texas, Professors Sue Texas A&M System Over Censorship Policy, Detail Violations of Academic Freedom

Faculty have been instructed to remove educational materials — like the film “Moonlight” and writings by Plato — from syllabi following policy banning race, gender, and sexual orientation related topics

HOUSTON – A group of professors filed suit Monday night challenging the Texas A&M University System’s new censorship policy that prohibits faculty from discussing certain topics and viewpoints related to race, sexual orientation, and gender.

The policy, which was implemented in late 2025 and requires extensive, bureaucratic syllabi review, has resulted in prohibitions on everything from the Oscar-winning film “Moonlight” to Plato’s writings on gender. The faculty impacted by this policy work throughout the Texas A&M System, which includes 12 universities, and across departments, from the Bush School of Government and Public Service to the English department.

The suit was filed on behalf of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and Professors Leonard Bright, Vanita Reddy, Landon Sadler, and Aaron George in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas. The complaint argues that the censorship policy governing Texas A&M is unconstitutionally vague and violates the First Amendment by discriminating against certain viewpoints.

“By embarking on a campaign of censorship, Texas A&M has abdicated its responsibility to support students’ right to learn and faculty’s right to teach,” said Todd Wolfson (he/him), president of the AAUP. “A university that censors Plato — as well as other significant texts — abandons its obligation to truth, free inquiry, and the public trust.”

“My ethics course — the only one of its kind

available to graduate students — was canceled for noncompliance with a draconian censorship policy,” said Leonard Bright (he/him), lead plaintiff, professor of Public Service and Administration, and president of the Texas A&M College Station chapter of the AAUP. “This policy has impacted my ability to do my job, my students’ ability to learn, and my colleagues’ ability to teach without fear of reprisal. The chilling effect of this policy is vast and immeasurable, and it poisons the very soul of what a university should be: a place where ideas are free to roam, and debate is uninhibited by the political winds.”

The censorship policy was implemented in November 2025 amid a sustained campaign to limit speech on certain topics in the college classroom. As a result of the policy change, numerous classes have been cancelled or forced to remove content. The women’s and gender studies program has been shuttered altogether because the program could not be reconciled with the new censorship policy.

Cancelled courses include Religions of the World; Introduction to Race and Ethnicity; Ethics in Public Policy; and a course focused on LGBTQ+ literature. Professors have been forced to edit their syllabi to comply with the policy, removing works like Plato’s “Myth of Androgyne;” Kevin Kruse’s “White Flight;” and even the Academy Award-winning film “Moonlight.” One history professor was allowed to teach Phyllis Schlafly’s campaign against the Equal Rights Amendment, but not

about how the Fourteenth Amendment expanded to protect women and LGBTQ+ people.

“This policy directly harms Black, Brown, LGBTQIA+, and all other Texans who have historically been discriminated against by subjecting discussion of their rights, identities, and indeed very existence to heavy-handed censorship,” said Chloe Kempf (she/her), staff attorney at the ACLU of Texas. “What’s more, it undermines all Texans’ First Amendment rights. If public officials can abuse their power to ban these topics and perspectives today, there’s nothing stopping them from targeting other subjects and points of view, including your own, down the line.”

“The First Amendment plainly prohibits this egregious attack on academic freedom at a public university,” said Emerson Sykes (he/him), senior staff attorney with the ACLU’s Speech, Privacy, and Technology Project. “This broad policy and the university’s opaque enforcement process makes it impossible to teach or to learn freely and endangers course content about everything from the history of slavery to Shakespeare to the hard sciences. Universities are sites of inquiry, debate, and discovery — banning entire categories of ideas is a betrayal of both their mission and the First Amendment.”

“We’re proud to represent these professors challenging a censorship policy that betrays Texas A&M’s established legacy as an institution that supports free and open inquiry,” said Jamie A. Aycock (he/him), attorney at Yetter Coleman LLP.

Teddy’s Answer Key

☆ ≡ SUDOKU ≡ ☺

≡ ANSWER KEY ≡

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2	5	8	6	7	4	1	1	3
1	7	4	8	2	9	5	3	6
8	9	5	2	6	3	7	6	1
4	1	6	7	9	5	8	8	3
7	3	2	1	8	7	9	5	2

Statepoint Crossword Puzzle

Solution: July 30 - HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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A	L	O	E			O	W	E	N		T	U	B	A	L	
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	A	R	E	A				C	A	P	R	I	C	O	R	N
S	W	A	N	S				U	R	N	S		E	P	I	C
H	A	S	T	E				S	T	E	T		N	A	S	A
E	Y	E	S					P	Y	A			T	H	E	A