

“Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters.” ~ Abraham Lincoln



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VOLUME 79 NUMBER 1

SERVING THE BLACK COMMUNITY WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR SINCE 1947

September 17- 23, 2026

Booked and Unbound: The Legacy of Black Women’s Literary Circles

By Gwen McKinney | Washington Informer

For much of her childhood, Rosalyn Coates endured severe asthma. Confined to limited physical activity, she had to swap galloping with neighborhood kids for a seat on the porch.

But never alone, Coates, called “Roz” by friends, always invited her trusty companion: a good book. “All I could do is sit my

buns still and read.”

So began the literary journey for Coates, 71, a retired attorney and **Oracle Set Book Club** member who helped incorporate the group’s nonprofit foundation, which has awarded annual scholarships to Washington, D.C., school students since 1999.

Touted as the oldest continuously operating Black

women’s literary circle in Washington, D.C., Oracle Set was launched in 1966 by Claudette Franklin, a passionate literacy advocate who assembled the original 15 members and remained active until her death in 1996. Two founding members, Bernadette Derr and Maggalean Westin,

Continue **Legacy** Page 2

Dallas ISD and DART launch hands-on training program for aspiring automotive technicians

By Mariah Conduff



Dallas ISD high school students interested in automotive careers will gain hands-on experience alongside industry professionals through a new partnership with Dallas Area Rapid Transit.

Dallas ISD and DART announce the High School Student Bus Maintenance Externship Program, a first-of-its-kind initiative connecting students in the

district’s Automotive Technician Program of Study with bus maintenance professionals.

"Our students grow the most when they’re in the real world solving real

problems," said Oswaldo Alvarenga, Dallas ISD Deputy Chief of Strategic Initiatives. "For us, partnering with DART is a meaningful way to support the next generation

of skilled technicians while creating immediate, hands-on impact for our students in high-demand career pathways."

Throughout the semester, participating stu-

dents will receive supervised training in areas such as multipoint vehicle inspections, engine fundamentals, and interior climate-system maintenance. By working alongside DART professionals, students will build technical knowledge, workplace experience, and leadership skills that can help prepare them for high-demand careers.

"DART recognizes just how important it is to support education in the region and to cultivate the next generation of diesel maintenance mechanics. Our expansive fleet of vehicles and professional mechanics are available for Dallas ISD students to expand their experience," said Trenise Winters, DART Chief Operations Officer.

The partnership is designed to expand career opportunities for Dallas ISD students while helping address the current shortage of diesel maintenance mechanics.

TALARICO ★ FOR TEXAS ★

Official Statement from James Talarico on Simmons ville Missionary Baptist Church Fire

“I am devastated to learn of the fire that destroyed Simmons ville Missionary Baptist Church in Killeen, the oldest African American church in the community, just days after the congregation celebrated its 75th anniversary.

For decades, Simmons-ville Missionary Baptist has

given the community a place to pray, gather, celebrate, and grieve. While the walls of this church may be gone, the people are still here — and the faith that carried this congregation through 75 years will carry it through this loss. My prayers will be with them the entire way.”

State Fair to Host Sensory-Friendly Mornings for the Eighth Year

New additions, including a wearable accessory and 24-day sensory-friendly room



DALLAS — September 14, 2026 — For the eighth year, the State Fair of Texas is offering Sensory-Friendly Mornings at the Fair every Wednesday – September 30, October 7, and 14, from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. – with a brand-new, free wearable accessory option and 24-day sensory-friendly room, accessible for all Fairgoers.

Providing a family-friendly environment is at the core of the State Fairs’ mission. Therefore, the Fair is excited to bring back Sensory-Friendly Mornings for

Continue **Fair** Page 2



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Continued Page 1

Booked and Unbound: The Legacy of Black Women’s Literary Circles



Photo Credit: iStockphoto /NNPA.

remain active six decades later. Today, members range in age from mid-30s to 80 and are capped at 18 members. Like most Black women reading circles, they traverse genres and hold rotating meetings at members’ homes, with good food and fellowship always on the menu.

A slice of joy and community, Oracle Set inspires self-determination, says Coates. “More than coming together to read, we affirm who we are through _what_ we read. We don’t wait for _The New York Times_ best sellers list to tell us what to choose. Our group opens us, not just to reading, but to the world that books inhabit.”

That same premise — radical and pioneering for their time — was embraced by one of the first recorded Black women’s reading groups. **The Female Literary Association**, founded by educator **Sara Mapps Douglas** in 1831, was based in Philadelphia and composed of “free” literate Black women.

Mostly leaders in the anti-slavery and suffrage movements, they were avid readers, writers and activists. They shared their own essays with the reading circle and delved into scripture, poetry and abolitionist journals. As the 19th century progressed into post-slavery emancipation, mutual aid

for southern sisters and their kin was a hallmark activity of these literary circles, often called women’s clubs. Black women’s literary clubs would blossom over the decades that followed, taking root in Detroit, New York, Pittsburgh, Indianapolis and Washington, D.C.

Kathy Freeman says those bold intentions of ancestors dating back two centuries remain in our bones. Leader of A Gathering of Women Readers in Philadelphia, she says Black women have instinctively embraced the causes of family, community and the world.

“For women who look like me, book clubs are built upon collective actions. While everyone isn’t left-leaning, we are all humanists.”

Black women’s literary circles rebuke patriarchy, Freeman asserts. “Though we are the backbone of every movement we support – the church, civil rights, Black liberation – we usually go unrecognized. But in our book clubs everyone has a voice.”

Freeman’s group has supported medical drives for Cuba, clothing drives for Senegal, local book drives and summer camp for the city’s un-housed population. They host guest speakers from Philly and beyond.

Continue **Legacy** Page 3

Continued **Fair** Page 1

an eighth year. The Fair collaborated with the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) and other local organizations to devise ways to make Sensory-Friendly Mornings beneficial and fun for all who choose to attend, with the goal of creating opportunities for people to experience the Fair in a more accessible way.

On Sensory-Friendly Mornings, adjustments are made across the Fairgrounds to accommodate any sensory-related concerns. The Fair has created a special guided itinerary with a list of activities and exhibits that are easy on the eyes and ears. You can find the itinerary at BigTex.com/Sensory to start planning your visit. Fairgoers will also be able to enjoy all the Midway fun without the usual lights and sounds from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. In addition, in the areas designated as “Quiet Zones,” families can go to these rooms should they need to depressurize throughout their Fair visit. Among these Quiet Zones is our Safe Kids Corral, which has now been designated as a sensory-friendly room for all 24 days of the Fair, from open to close, for Fairgoers who may need a safe space during their other visits not on Wed-

nesdays.

As of 2026, the State Fair of Texas is a proud new member of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program, an internationally recognized organization that helps create a more inclusive and supportive experience for people with non-visible disabilities by offering sunflower-themed accessories for individuals to wear during their visits to events, airports, theme parks, and more. Free

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program wristbands will be available at our Hospitality Centers, Guest Relations locations, and the Safe Kids Corral for guests who choose to wear one as a discreet way to indicate that they may need additional assistance, patience, or understanding during their visit. Wristbands do not automatically provide priority access, fast-track services, or a place at the front of a queue.

The State Fair of Texas will be partnering with Joni and Friends Texas for a fourth year during the first Sensory-Friendly Morning of the Fair on Wednesday, September 30. Joni and Friends is a nonprofit organization that supports folks with disabilities around the world. Joni and Friends Texas will be providing registered families with a volunteer buddy to provide additional support during your Fair visit.

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Teddy’s Creation

(Answer Key on Page 8)



= SUDOKU =

Fill in the missing numbers 1-9.

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

RELIGIOUS/NEWS

The Solemn Announcement of an Angel and John’s Instructions to Eat the Little Book

Revelation 10:1-11



Rev. Johnny Calvin Smith

Chapter 10 serves as a hiatus, the interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets. Previously, we saw that chapter 7 served as an interlude between the sixth and seventh seals. Between the sixth and seventh seals, we noticed the sealing of the One hundred forty-four thousand and the salvation of the great multitude. As chapter 10 opens, the Apostle John introduces a mighty (strong) Angel who comes from heaven with great power and authority (vv. 1-4). This powerful Angel was clothed with a cloud, having a rainbow upon his head; his face was brilliant as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. John uttered that this mighty strong Angel held a scroll, and stood with his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land. This same Angel shouted like the roar of a lion. The Angel’s shout was indeed impressive, for when the Angel

shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke! John was instructed not to record what the seven thunders said. In verses 5-7, the mighty Angel made an oath to God, the Eternal and powerful Creator, and affirmed in the oath that “there should be time no longer,” and that “the mystery of God” will be finished soon. The expression, “there should be time no longer,” can be properly translated as “there will be no more delay.” This Angel was making an emphatic announcement that the seventh trumpet would bring about the accomplishment of the mystery of God. Speaking on the expression, “the mystery of God,” William R. Newell writes: “This expression, ‘the mystery of God,’ in this connection seems to indicate all those counsels and dealings of God made known by Him to and through the Old Testament

prophets, concerning His governmental proceedings with men on earth looking always toward the establishment of the kingdom in the hands of Christ. When Christ comes to take the kingdom, there will be no mystery, but, on the contrary, manifestation” (The Book of Revelation, p. 143). In verses 8-11, the Apostle John was instructed to eat the scroll (book), which was sweet (like honey) in his mouth, but to his stomach, it was bitter. In other words, at the instructions of the Angel, John eats the little book, and the results were bitter sweet! In eating of the little book, John was brought to an understanding that the revelations of God’s word may be delightful to his taste, but becomes bitter when internalized because the revelations contained God’s judgments on the earth during the Great Tribulation Period. As believers, we should read

God’s Word daily with delight and appropriate it “by eating it”, for wholesome living. Prophets who appropriated God’s Word “by eating it” and found God’s Word to be a delight were Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In Jeremiah 15:16, Jeremiah stated: “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.” Ezekiel also expressed his delight in eating God’s Word, as he wrote: “Moreover He said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that roll. And He said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness” (Ezekiel 3:1-3).

In verses 9-10, John eagerly received the little book that was sweet to his taste when he ate it, but became bitter to his digestive system and brought travail of soul and sorrow of heart because there was more judgment to come. As children of God, as we continue to assimilate the truths of Revelation, it should bring delight to our hearts that God will bring all things to a consummate end in the Second Coming of Christ; however, when we digest the fact that a Christ-rejecting world will be severely judged, then that fact should prompt us to share the gospel with those who are lost before it is too late! As we conclude this chapter, John is promised the opportunity to preach to many more governmental officials of his time the contents of this book (v. 11).

“*May God Bless!*”

Continued **Legacy** Page 2

One, a few years before the assaults in Gaza, was Palestinian-American activist/author Susan Abulhawa. Freeman, 69, a “happily retired” program analyst for the Philadelphia Health Department, started the reading group eight years ago. They gather quarterly, 13 strong, with two books for discussion and always open with wellness check-ins. Most active in-person clubs skew older. However, the mix is

intergenerational and convened online, by sororities, churches, social clubs and even celebrities (Oprah Book Club). Monique Greenwood, Co-founder of ****Go On Girl Book Club**** (GOGBC), points to the sense of belonging that book clubs invoke. She remembers 1991, when her two friends, Tracy Mitchell-Brown and Lynda Johnson, were engrossed in chats about a book they were both coincidentally reading, *No Easy Place to Be*, a debut novel by Steven Corbin about the Harlem Renais-

sance. “I was feeling very left out... and wanted to be part of what seemed like a really important fellowship.” From there, the trio planted the seeds of Go On Girl Book Club. Greenwood, 67, former editor-in-chief of *Essence* and now owner of Akwaaba Bed and Breakfast Inns, anchored the first group in New York City. “We were casually structured, guided by some important criteria. Our membership was capped at 12 to coincide with the months we

would meet.” “Reading and reflection of the books served merely as a jumping-off point to share and exchange ideas; to hear each other’s voices,” Greenwood offered. As members relocated, some carried the model with them, starting new chapters in other cities. Today, one of the nation’s largest in-person literary circles, Go On Girl claims 51 chapters and more than 500 members across the country. They hold an annual conference, distribute merchandise, and in 1999, wrote the book on

book clubs. The *Go On Girl! Book Club Guide for Reading Groups*, authored by the three founders, is a roadmap for starting, structuring and sustaining a successful literary circle, featuring reading lists, author chats and discussion questions. Joyce Ferguson-Fleming and her D.C.-based Sister Girls Book Club recently celebrated their 25th anniversary. Ferguson-Fleming, 77, a voracious lifelong

Continue **Legacy** Page 5

~ THEME: PHYSICS 101 (Solution will appear in September 24 edition)

- ACROSS
1. Mediterranean island country

6. Not Miss or Ms

9. Contributions to the poor

13. *Physicist of apple-related revelation fame

14. Bottle top

15. Be of use

16. Wilt "The ____" Chamberlain

17. Sailor's assent

18. Nincompoop

19. *Electric current path

21. *Like magnifying glass lens

23. Unhappy

24. Southern stew staple

25. ____ Beta Kappa

28. Harper and Bruce, e.g.

30. Type of jacket

35. Nevada city

37. "The Road Runner" corporation

39. Solemnly promised

40. One twelfth of a foot

41. What blacksmith did to a horse

43. Ice dancer's jump

44. Phishing and such

46. Nobel Peace Prize home

47. Either right or left

48. Good guy

50. Same as island

52. Tierra ____ Fuego

53. Third-person possessive pronoun

55. Yoko's last name

57. *Electric current unit

60. *It pulls things down

64. Doom's companion

65. Thomas Paine's "The ____ of Reason"

67. 10 percent to charity, e.g.

68. Prevention measure

69. Sir George Ivan Morrison's stage name

70. Wife's dad, e.g.

71. In a frenzy

72. Three ahead of PST

73. Picts and Gauls
- DOWN

1. Catchall abbr.

2. ____ spumante

3. Bear's den, e.g.

4. Same as talcums

5. Opposite of potential

6. Med. sch. requirement

7. *Path of light

8. Heard by Horton

9. Tel ____, city

10. Bowling ball path

11. Seductive one

12. Like a fox

15. Historical records

20. Some are bright

22. Ball-shaped object

24. *Reverse one, in the kitchen

25. *Rainbow-producing device

26. From this time on

27. Relating to Quechuan people

29. *Sound reverberation

31. Hole-punching tools

32. Coral polyp, e.g.

33. Eat away

34. *What similar magnetic poles do

36. *Electrical resistance units

38. Mature elvers

42. Sorrow

45. "In the grand ____ of things"

49. Having Everything Revealed singer-songwriter

51. Related on mother's side

54. Plunder

56. Sheep-like

57. Grad

58. a.k.a. kissing disease

59. Pox mark

60. Gentleman, informally

61. It will

62. Not this

63. Certain coniferous trees

64. India's smallest state

66. *Not liquid or solid

Statepoint Crossword Puzzle Theme: PHYSICS 101

CROSSWORD														
1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13						14				15				
16						17				18				
19					20			21	22					
			23				24							
25	26	27		28		29			30		31	32	33	34
35			36		37			38		39				
40					41				42		43			
44				45		46					47			
48					49		50			51		52		
				53		54			55		56			
	57	58	59					60				61	62	63
64						65	66			67				
68						69				70				
71						72				73				

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SPORTS/NEWS PAGE

7 Day Weather Forecast for DFW

Thursday, Sept. 17



H -98°
L -80°

Friday, Sept. 18



H 99°
L -78°

Saturday, Sept. 19



H -99°
L -77°

Sunday, Sept. 20



H 98°
L 79°

Monday, Sept. 21



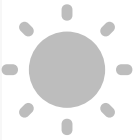
H -98°
L -76*

Tuesday, Sept. 22



H - 94°
L -76°

Wednesday, Sept. 23



H -95°
L -74°

Prairie View Makes Bold Statement in Dominant Labor Day Classic Win

Source: BlackPressUSA Newswire

Terrance’s Take:

PRAIRIE VIEW — On the surface, it seems like Prairie View’s dominant 52-14 win over Texas Southern in the 41st Labor Day Classic was a bold statement about what’s to come.

But in Prairie View coach Tremaine Jackson’s mind, the resounding early-season showing against a rival, SWAC opponent, and West Division foe was more of a testament to what it took for the Panthers to rise to the occasion like they did Sunday morning on an ESPN national platform.

“That they will punch you in your face,” Jackson said when I asked what he learned about his team. “I’m not trying to sound any kind of way by saying that. You don’t get to see behind the scenes with this squad. You didn’t get to see fall camp; you didn’t get to see summer training.

“So a lot of what I saw today is what we built in the summer and the spring when we go through

D.O.G. training. We made them tap out. It ain’t no secret about that.”

The Panthers, the defending SWAC Champions, showed why they are the favorites to repeat as conference champs again and to represent the SWAC in the Black College Football national championship. They stole the drama out of this storied rivalry from the outset – literally – when Jahbari Kuykendall took the opening kickoff 90 yards for the touchdown.

It never felt like this one was going to be close from there. These are two good West Division teams that could finish one-two again.

Prairie View is just that much better in Year Two of Tremaine Jackson.

“We dominated. Our preparation. We prepare like nobody else,” said Prairie View running back Chase Bingmon, who rushed for 60 yards and a touchdown on 10 carries. “The way we are built up, the way we are coached up; we’re prepared. We dominated.”

What was telling about Sunday’s performance was that Prairie View just kind of did what it wanted to do when it wanted to do it. Texas Southern, behind the ground attack of running back Athean Renfro and quarterback Cam’Ron McCoy, won the rushing battle 216 yards to 160 and dominated the time of possession 40:22 to 17:35.

Yet it wasn’t even close. Quarterback Tevin Carter, in his first season as the solidified starter, was the pure definition of a dual threat as he picked up key yards on the ground, including a 24-yard touchdown, while he showed us what he can do with his arm and decision-making by completing 16 of 22 passes for 217 yards and four touchdowns.

The Panthers’ defense, which has shown some susceptibility to the rush over the past two weeks, showed it can pull it together and make plays when necessary. The unit kept McCoy mostly in check, with Malachi Wil-

liams and J.J. Jean-Louis combining for four of the six sacks on him.

“We forcefully dominated. We took their will,” said Jackson, whose team improved to 1-1 overall after losing its season-opening game at Tarleton State last week. “And we still didn’t play in the manner that we wanted to play. So I’m excited about where we still can go because we have a long way to go still.”

Things toughen up for the Panthers considerably next week when they head to Waco to take on the Baylor Bears of the Big 12. These are commonly known as money games, where FCS schools line up for a beatdown and a nice payday for their trouble.

But Jackson has a message for the Bears if they think it’s going to be that easy.

“I tell you what, we are not going to Baylor to pick up no checks. So don’t write that story,” Jackson said. “Don’t write no story about us; we’re just going to have a good showing.

We are going to Baylor to get a win. That’s how we do things. That’s how these guys prepare.”

In the meantime, TSU and head coach Cris Dishman are having to figure out some things after coming into the SWAC opener feeling pretty good after a 42-30 season-opening win over North Carolina Central. The Tigers will play two of their next three games out of conference, beginning with a trip to El Paso next week to take on UTEP.

As bad a loss as Sunday was, Dishman said the best thing his players can do is put it behind them.

“The message was, we’ve got a game next week because one loss can turn into two losses,” Dishman said. “I don’t play Prairie View again until next year.

“I know on Twitter and social media, they play each other all of the time, but I don’t. I don’t have to worry about Prairie View, and I wish them the best of luck. But I do hope they

slip up so that we can slip in.”

Jackson is sitting comfortably at the top of the West and does not currently need any help to get to where he wants to be.

“We get to sit it out and watch others fight it out for a little bit because we go non-conference for the next two weeks,” he said. “This is what we wanted to do. The winner of this game was going to put themselves in the driver’s seat in the West and control their own destiny and not need any help. That’s what we wanted to do. We don’t ever want any help from anybody else.

“We can’t rely on other people. We can only rely on what we do within our program.”

Based on reporting by Houston Defender.

Originally published by BlackPressUSA Newswire — <https://blackpressusa.com/prairie-view-makes-bold-statement-in-dominant-labor-day-classic-win/>

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Continued **Legacy** Page 3

reader, was filling a void left by her daughter’s departure for college. She was not necessarily looking for new friends, but instead was mission-driven to assemble like-minded Black women.

“The goal was simple — a book club where everyone was invested in reading. We didn’t come together as best friends, but as book lovers.”

Founder Ferguson-Fleming was joined for an interview with original members Lisa Griffith and Shelly Jackson.

Griffith, 71, said the idea of a book club was kicked around for at least two years. “One day Joyce set a date and time, and we started with eight members.” Over the 25 years, members have come and gone, but most have been with the book club for 15 years or more.

Said Jackson, “Joyce actually used our workplace — the DC Municipal Court — as her recruitment ground.” Jackson, 64, a probation officer, said members included attorneys, administrators, clerks, and social workers. “We were all open to wide genres

and themes, different perspectives, honest discussions. ... No one judging you.”

“We feed each other,” adds Griffith, a retired court reporter. “We lay out food, ideas, and nourish each other emotionally and spiritually...We go places I wouldn’t go on my own. Through Sister Girls, I am exposed.”

Over the decades they’ve enjoyed field trips, celebrated milestone birthdays, mourned the passing of members’ loved ones and cheered the birth of grandbabies. “We’ve grown from a reading circle to a sisterhood,” confides Ferguson-Fleming.

The legions of Black women book club members tell a bigger story in data released by Pew Research Center in 2014 exploring reading habits of Americans. Pew found that women across races and socioeconomic statuses read considerably more than their male counterparts. But Black women, especially college-educated, read the most, surpassing _all_ demographic groups in consumption of every book format — bound, audio-

books and e-books.

Curtis Bunn, a retired journalist and author of 14 books, attests to the Pew findings. “Black women absorb passion more than any other demographic group.”

Even before his 1999 debut novel _Baggage Check_ hit #1 on the _Essence_ Book List, Bunn embraced the word-of-mouth magic of Black women readers and embarked on speaking tours to book clubs across the country. “I always left those book clubs feeling uplifted. It was like going to church,” recalls Bunn, 65. “You get feedback that makes you a better writer.”

That feeling of being “immersed in a sustained happy hour” convinced Bunn to launch **The National Book Club Conference** in 2003. Nicknamed “Literary Bliss Weekend,” he marked the 22nd anniversary this year. Held in Atlanta and attended by some 400 primarily Black women (95%), conferees pay \$350 for a series of general sessions, an awards event and breakout workshops attended by prominent authors and public luminaries.

Statepoint Crossword Puzzle

Solution: September 10 ~ MOVIE QUOTES

B	L	E	S	S		B	B	C			D	U	P	E			
A	I	T	C	H		A	I	L			T	E	N	E	T		
R	A	N	E	E		B	O	A			U	L	T	R	A		
F	R	A	N	K	L	Y			S	E	R	I	O	U	S		
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EDITORIAL PAGE

Can You Sign A Pro Contract And Then Play College Football Again?

By James B. Ewers Jr., Ed.



Dr. James Ewers

College sports have grown rapidly. Increased scholarships, television deals, and new conference alignments have all played a part. Now let’s add the possibility of players signing professional football contracts and then returning to play in college.

I’m watching now only as a fan. Years ago, I was a college student-athlete and enjoyed playing the sport I loved. I didn’t know much about conference rules and regulations.

What I did know was that I had four years of scholarship eligibility and had to get good grades to keep it. And of course, winning was a part of it. Thankfully, things worked out well for me. My college experience was fulfilling and fun.

Is being a student-athlete different today? Is there more pressure to perform? Yes, there is. I have often said that you may be the

best in your house, the best on your block, and the best in your community. However, is that enough to receive a college scholarship?

According to the NCAA, about 180,000 students receive some type of athletic scholarship. If you are in that number, you are fortunate so don’t take it for granted. If you are trying to get in that number, keep working hard and you’ll get there.

Today, college student-athletes leave college early to pursue professional sports careers. Here is where it gets confusing, at least for me and for many others from the old school.

I am perplexed and confounded that a college student-athlete can sign a professional sports contract and then return to play in college. Recently, a confirmed report says, “A Louisiana state judge granted a temporary restraining order allowing a group that includes 16 college football players, some of whom participated in NFL training camps, to return to college sports and enter the transfer portal for the 2026 season.”

Paul Finebaum of ESPN said, “College football has officially plunged into an

abyss”. If you are a college football purist, you’ll say this is unbelievable. Madness is happening right in front of us.

However, not everyone is on this play-football-at-all-costs train. Just a few weeks ago, the SEC presidents and chancellors released the following statement: “College athletes, not former professional athletes, have been at the heart of the Southeastern Conference. Individuals who choose to leave college athletics, sign professional contracts, and compete professionally should not then be permitted to return to college competition.”

The Big Ten Conference and the Big 12 Conference have already issued similar statements. Other conferences have weighed in with their displeasure about athletes who have signed professional contracts returning to playing college ball. All of them realize that something is wrong with this picture.

Will this get worse before it gets better? Having the courts seemingly in charge of college athletics isn’t right. Student-athletes who leave college for the

pros still risk not making it. They are receiving bad advice and poor counseling from their advisors.

The college football season has already started. Lane Kiffin, coach of LSU (Louisiana State University), once said he would recruit some of these professional players who have returned to the transfer portal. Fortunately, this did not happen. Everyone knows that football is king in the Bayou State.

The SEC was going to enforce a half-season suspension for coaches who use former professional players. This would happen if LSU added Dae’Quan Wright and Zxavian Harris to its 105-player roster. Records show that neither player was on their team roster. I believe LSU made the right decision.

College sports rules have become arbitrary and capricious. The NCAA, once the athletic vanguard, is losing its shine. Athletic conferences are beginning to wield more power and control. However, courts and athletes themselves are now the new contestants in this football takeover. Who will have the last word? It depends upon who you ask.

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Texas NAACP Condemns Bo French’s Racist “Otherism,” Calls for Decency, Inclusion, and Democratic Participation

AUSTIN, Texas — September 16, 2026

Gary Bledsoe, President of the Texas NAACP, issued the following statement in response to Texas Railroad Commission candidate Bo French’s comments about a photo of University of Texas Longhorn football fans of Asian ancestry, whom he referred to as “foreigners” and “what is wrong with this country.”

Mr. French’s remarks are unacceptable and dangerous. They traffic in racial bias and “otherism,” targeting Texans—including UT students—based on perceived race, ethnicity, or national origin. Asian Texans are our neighbors, classmates, colleagues, and family members. They are just as Texan and American as anyone else. Reducing young Longhorn fans to “foreigners” because of how they look is not just wrong; it is precisely the

kind of divisive stereotyping that corrodes our civic life and invites harassment and exclusion.

It is especially troubling that a candidate for the Texas Railroad Commission—an agency that regulates oil and gas and touches the lives and livelihoods of communities across our state—would resort to overt racial appeals. Mr. French has defended his comments by asserting that institutions prioritize “foreign students and workers” and by claiming, without evidence, that this results in fraud. This rhetoric mirrors a long, shameful tradition of scapegoating and conspiracy-mongering. It distracts from real policy issues and sows distrust among Texans.

Importantly, condemnation of Mr. French’s post has come from across the political spectrum. State Rep. Drew Darby called it “racism, plain and simple,”

and urged Mr. French to delete the post and apologize. State Rep. Jeff Leach also called it racist. Other Republican leaders described it as gross and unbecoming. We commend those voices of conscience. Basic decency is not partisan.

This episode is not isolated. Mr. French has previously faced scrutiny for provocative commentary, including a prior survey about whether Jews or Muslims are a “threat,” which prompted calls for him to resign. When a candidate repeatedly tests the boundaries of bigotry, it raises profound concerns about judgment, fitness for public trust, and respect for the diverse communities officials are sworn to serve.

Moments like this underscore why civil-rights protections—including the Voting Rights Act—remain necessary. When candidates deploy racialized narratives to marginalize

communities, it reveals ongoing barriers to equal participation and representation. Safeguards that ensure fair access to the ballot and equal voice in our democracy are not relics of the past; they are living commitments we must uphold to protect all Texans.

We call on Texans of common decency—Democrats, Republicans, and independents alike—to reject this rhetoric. Let us affirm the dignity and belonging of all people of color, including Asian Texans, and stand together for an inclusive Texas where every student, worker, and family can thrive without being told they do not belong. We urge the public to make their voices heard at the ballot box and to engage in civic life with vigilance and compassion. Democracy depends on it, and Texas is stronger when every Texan is respected.

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A Homegoing Celebration

for

Maceo Gray

Chaplain Maceo Gray was born in Kaufman, Texas, on December 22, 1940, to Wilmer O. and Ocie Gray. He grew up in a large family of nine children and was raised with values of faith, family, hard work, perseverance, and service that would remain foundational throughout his life. He went home to be with the Lord on September 7, 2026, at the age of 85, following a courageous battle with stomach cancer.

Maceo grew up in Dallas, Texas, and graduated from Lincoln High School. He continued his education at Prairie View A&M University, where he earned his degree in Electrical Engineering in 1963. While attending Prairie View, Maceo met Annie Pearl Hatcher, who was studying Biology. They were united in marriage on June 6, 1964, beginning a loving partnership in marriage, family, education, and ministry that would span almost 54 years.

Following their marriage, Maceo and Annie moved to Kansas City, Missouri, where Maceo began his professional career with the Bendix Corporation. Their family grew with the birth of their two beloved daughters, Karen and Kathleen.

Maceo enjoyed a distinguished career with Bendix Corporation, later Allied-Signal, where he served as an electrical engineer and department head. A lifelong learner, he continued his education while advancing professionally, earning a Master of Science in Electrical Engineering (M.S.E.E.) from the University of Missouri and completing the Executive Fellows MBA program at Rockhurst. His intelligence, strong work ethic, leadership, integrity, and commitment

to excellence distinguished both his professional and personal life.

In 1993, Maceo and Annie took early retirement from their respective careers to answer God’s call to full-time ministry. They moved to Dallas, Texas, where they attended Dallas Theological Seminary and graduated together in 1998. Maceo earned a Master of Theology degree, further preparing him for the ministry and Christian service that would characterize the next chapter of his life.

Maceo and Annie also shared a passion for writing and ministry. Together, they wrote three published books: *Bridging the Racial Divide* with the Cross of Christ, *The Christian Comfort Companion*, and *Passing on Your Christian Heritage to Your Children and Generations to Come*. These books created a lasting literary legacy that reflected their faith, shared wisdom, love for others, and desire to encourage people in their relationship with God. Their books remain a testament to the partnership they shared in marriage, ministry, and service.

Following his theological education, Chaplain Gray faithfully served through Marketplace Ministries. In this role, he ministered to individuals in the workplace, offering prayer, encouragement, spiritual guidance, and compassionate support to people and families through both the joys and challenges of life. His ministry allowed him to combine his natural gifts of leadership and wisdom with his deep love for God and people.

At the heart of Maceo’s mission and calling was his desire to bring people to Christ. He sought to share the love of God with every-

one he encountered and to point others toward the hope, salvation, and eternal life found through Jesus Christ. John 3:16 reflected the message he carried in his heart and shared through his life and ministry:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Maceo was a faithful member of Red Bridge Baptist Church, where he served in numerous areas of ministry and leadership. He chaired the Personnel Committee for over 25 years, faithfully taught an adult Sunday School class, and shared his musical gifts by playing the clarinet in the church orchestra. Whether teaching God’s Word, providing leadership, making music, or quietly encouraging someone who needed support, Maceo believed the gifts God had given him were to be used in service to others and to help lead people to Christ.

His commitment to Christian service was also demonstrated through his service and volunteer work with City Union Mission. Maceo served as President of the Board, volunteered his time, and provided faithful leadership in support of the Mission’s work of serving individuals and families in need throughout the Kansas City community. Through both his formal leadership and personal service, he helped advance the Mission’s ministry and demonstrated his compassion for those in need.

Maceo’s Christian faith was not simply something he professed; it was the foundation upon which he built his life. He sought to honor God through his marriage, his family, his professional career, his ministry,

his writing, and his service to others. He believed in serving God faithfully, sharing wisdom generously, helping those in need, loving people well, and bringing others into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ.

Maceo was also a devoted Kansas City Chiefs fan. He loved being a part of Chiefs Kingdom and was a season-ticket holder for 57 years, sharing countless memorable game days in Section 120 with Annie Pearl before her passing and with Kathleen afterward. His loyalty to the Chiefs was a cherished part of his life and a reflection of the enthusiasm and joy he brought to the things he loved.

Among Maceo’s greatest earthly blessings was his beloved wife, Annie Pearl. Together they built a home centered upon faith and family, raised their two daughters, shared in ministry and writing, and later experienced the joy of becoming grandparents and great-grandparents. Following Annie’s passing on April 17, 2018, Maceo continued to cherish her memory and the extraordinary life they had built together.

Maceo was a devoted husband; a loving father, affectionately known as Dad; a cherished PaPa and great-grandfather; and a beloved brother, uncle, friend, mentor, chaplain, teacher, author, and faithful servant of Jesus Christ. His family was among his greatest joys, and the faith, wisdom, values, and love he poured into them will continue to influence generations to come. Maceo and Annie Pearl created a legacy through Christ’s love, a legacy rooted in faith, family, service, writing, and a desire to bring others to Christ.



Chaplain Maceo Gray
December 22, 1940 - September 7, 2026

Maceo was preceded in death by his beloved wife of almost 54 years, Annie Pearl Gray; his parents, Wilmer O. and Ocie Gray; his brothers, Wilmer, Brucy, and Everrette Gray; and his sisters, Merfay and Olivia.

He leaves to cherish his memory his two loving daughters, Karen L. Selby (Christopher) and Kathleen A. Smith (Todd); his brothers, Edward and James; his sister, Mary; his grandchildren, Jessica, Joshua, Jayna, Charity, and Christopher Jr.; his great-grandchildren, Melody, Landon, and Milo; and a host of brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family members, church family, ministry colleagues, friends, readers, and others whose lives were touched by his faith, wisdom, kindness, leadership, writing, and service.

For 85 years, Chaplain Maceo Gray lived a ser-

vant’s life marked by faith, family, hard work, leadership, joy, and a steadfast commitment to sharing the Gospel and bringing people to Christ. His legacy is found in the faith he lived, the family he loved, the books he and Annie wrote, the people he served, and the countless lives he touched with the love of Jesus.

His family mourns his passing while finding comfort in the promises of the faith by which he lived. They rejoice in knowing that Maceo is now in the presence of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and reunited with the love of his life, Annie Pearl.

Chaplain Maceo Gray finished his race faithfully, leaving behind a legacy of faith, family, leadership, service, love, writing, and devotion to the mission God gave him: to share and spread the message of Christ’s love.

~ FOND MEMORIES ~

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~ FOND MEMORIES ~

(Continued Page 7)

The Family of Chaplain Maceo Gray and his late wife, Annie Pearl Gray,

Salutes Prairie View A&M University's

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