

The Macon Melody

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Bibb County's local source for community news

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Violent weekend in Macon leaves four dead

Laura E. Corley

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Two separate shootings left four people dead and several injured in Bibb County over the weekend. The spate of deaths nearly doubled the number of killings in the county so far this year.

A graduation party at a house on Williamson Road apparently turned violent in the pre-dawn hours Saturday. Sheriff's deputies arrived at the home and found three people shot. One man was killed, according to a news release from the sheriff's office.

Jaurice Markel Haywood, 25, was pronounced dead by Deputy Coroner Ronnie Miley about 2:30 a.m.

A few miles away — and a little less than 24 hours later — another shooting left three people dead and six others wounded at Midtown Daiquiri Bar & Grill on Log Cabin Drive in the former location of Francar's Wings.

The shooting occurred at about midnight, according to the sheriff's office.

Half-brothers Jedarrius Meadows

Jr., 28, and Javarsia Meadows, 24, were pronounced dead along with 32-year-old Javonta Faulks, Coroner Leon Jones said.

Jones said the bar had no security working when the shooting happened in the parking lot where people started congregating. The bar shares a building with a Pentecostal church, a stone's throw from a shopping center

on Presidential Parkway.

Six others were wounded but are expected to survive, Jones said. Three of them were taken to the hospital in personal vehicles while the other three were transported by ambulance.

Jones said emotions ran high when

See SHOOTINGS, Page A2

School board and superintendent at odds over budget

Casey Choung

Melody Reporter

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In a grueling, nearly five hours long meeting, the Bibb County school board failed to adopt a tentative budget for fiscal year 2026, as members could not come to an agreement about the superintendent's requests for additional spending.

The budget failed to pass as board members were locked in a 4-4 vote. Board members Sundra Woodford, Henry Ficklin, Daryl Morton and Barney Hester voted against the budget and board members Lisa Garrett-Boyd, Kristin Hanlon, Myrtice Johnson and James Freeman voted in favor of its passage.

Since the board's second budget workshop earlier this month, Sims changed his recommendations to nix requests for a leadership coach and an assistant athletics director.

Implementing a 3% raise for certified teachers and a new salary schedule would cost the district about \$7.7 million. Sims' additional budget requests amount to a little more than \$200,000.

Sims told board members his recommendations are "nominal" and made to be "budget-neutral." He also said he does not see a way to keep the district a competitive employer without raises and salary schedule changes.

"We worked hard on this budget," Sims told The Melody. "I need more information to say what we are willing to change."

Before the board voted on the budget, Ficklin proposed removing the superinten-

dent's recommendations in the budget, including a truancy consultant and raises for the district's maintenance and elementary service directors.

That motion also failed 4-4 along the same lines.

Ficklin said the board needs to reduce spending to make the budget more acceptable, as the board may need to raise taxes, which could jeopardize public support for a future Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax later down the line.

A drastic increase in the district's budget deficit from \$3 million in the hole last year to \$21 million in this year's tentative budget is "tremendous," Ficklin said.

"We need to look at some other things to reduce this budget, and that is to reduce the spending in this budget," he said.

Ficklin called for the district to cut out-of-state travel but his motion was not seconded. He said he agrees with the proposed salary raises and suggested increasing them further at a recent budget meeting — but the deficit is far too large.

Johnson said she thought all of Sims' recommendations were important, especially the raises for teachers. She also said it's necessary to include the raises to keep the district competitive.

"If they don't get what they need, they are going to go somewhere else where they can get it," Johnson told The Melody. "I want to be able to keep all the people right here in Bibb to serve our children."

See BUDGET, Page A2

Five of Macon's Finest

Remembering local war heroes for Memorial Day



Ed Grisamore / The Melody

A pair of empty military boots sits outside the gate to the Stanislaus neighborhood at the corner of Pio Nono, Vineville and Pierce avenues in Macon. The boots are placed there every year on Memorial Day in honor of fallen soldiers from Bibb County and throughout the world.

Ed Grisamore
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One was killed on a battleship that was torpedoed at Pearl Harbor. Others lost their lives along frozen rivers in Europe and frigid foxholes in Korea.

Death came for one at the hands of a suicide bomber in Afghanistan, and for another a member of the "Lost Platoon," a casualty in the first major battle of the longest war the U.S. has ever fought. They made a movie about it called "We Were Soldiers."

Their calls of duty were separated by eight decades and four wars.

Their names are not as familiar as Sgt. Rodney Davis, who threw himself on an enemy grenade and saved the lives of the men in his company.

Or Bobby Jones, who for more than 35 years was the lone Macon serviceman listed as missing in action from Vietnam. The I-75/I-16 interchange is named in his honor.

George Vining, Jerry Blumberg, Thomas Jefferson "Sugar Boy" Barksdale, Eddie Brown Jr. Kelley Courtney.

Macon was their common ground. Their roots were here. It was home. They never came back.

George Vining

George Vining did not live to see the sun rise across Pearl Harbor on the Sunday morning of December 7, 1941. He was a Navy petty officer second class, assigned to the mess hall aboard the USS California.

So it is not known if the 20-year-old Macon man heard the roar of the approaching planes over the clanging of pots and pans at breakfast. He did hear the sirens, though, and he rushed port side to his assigned battle station.

Vining was one of the 20 Black men enlisted aboard the California, all of them

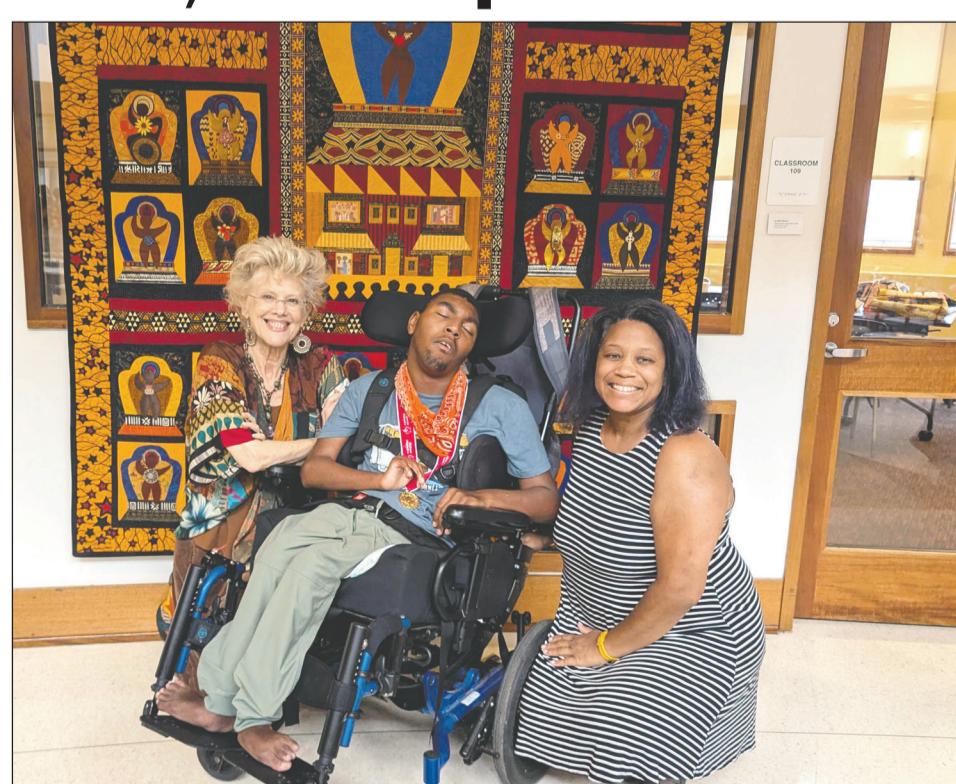
mess attendants. His duty was to help pass the ammunition to the gunners on the deck.

The California was the flagship along "Battleship Row" in Pearl Harbor and was on the front line of the first attack wave. It was pounded by six bombs from Japanese fighters and took three torpedo hits from their torpedo planes. The California was one of four Navy battleships that were sunk. A dozen other ships were damaged, and 188 U.S. aircraft were destroyed.

Vining was one of the 104 crew members who died on the California, second only to

See MEMORIAL, Page A5

Tubman exhibit 'Embracing Possibility' highlights lives, accomplishments of people with disabilities



Evelyn Davidson
Community Reporter
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The collective voices of Gifted Harmony Choir floated through the packed atrium of the Tubman Museum last Sunday at the opening of a new exhibit.

"I see trees of green, red roses too. I see them bloom for me and you. And I think to myself what a wonderful world," sang the group — members of an organization focused on music accessibility for people with special needs.

Gifted Harmony performed "Oh Happy Day" and "It's a Wonderful World" in honor of the "Embracing Possibility" exhibit, which chronicles disability justice in Macon through the eyes of people with disabilities, including art and interactive scenarios.

"It is a tapestry of the collective work of the people of Georgia who have gone out to impact the world with (their) gift," said Derona King, a citizen advocacy coordinator and founder of Story Matters, who spoke

at the opening ceremony.

The "Embracing Possibility" exhibit spans two floors of the Tubman Museum and begins with an overview of the history of disability discrimination, the fight for justice and the laws leading to change.

King read a brief statement of purpose as written in the exhibit program: "To shift the narrative, inviting visitors to witness the power, dignity and capacities of people with disabilities."

Other parts of the exhibit include a library and sensory room, a film room and other art created by individuals with disabilities.

Art is a form of resistance, according to Georgia state director at the Southern Poverty Law Center Y.T. Bell.

"This (president's) administration is doing all the deliberate efforts to reduce some of the guidance, provisions and regulations," she said.

Derek Heard, a self-advocate, artist and founder of graphic art

See TUBMAN, Page A3

Fiber artist Beth Mount poses with Noah Williams and his mother Naomi at the "Embracing Possibility" exhibit opening at The Tubman Museum.



'Village Talks' radio show hopes to inspire Middle Georgians

Evelyn Davidson
Community Reporter

Community activists L.J. Malone and Tia Lockhart's new radio show "Village Talks" on Glory 107.9 aims to amplify and unite the voices of Middle Georgia's marginalized communities.

"Village Talks" will provide a platform to discuss issues that Malone and Lockhart believe don't receive enough attention through weekly "community and culture conversations."

"We have to give a voice to people who aren't being spoken for," said Malone.

Their effort to give a voice to overlooked communities is one reason Malone and Lockhart say they are excited to broadcast the show on Glory. The station also hosts shows such as "Ask Elaine" with Bibb County politician Elaine Lucas.

Malone hails from a long line of community organizers. His mother, Phyllis Malone, runs Habersham Records in West Macon, while his uncle, Alex Habersham, is the publisher of Macon Black Pages.

Malone, who is from Macon, remembers witnessing parts of the city grow and develop, while many of its Black neighborhoods were left behind.

He called this disparity "the elephant in the room" when it comes to discussions about how to foster positive change in Macon.

Certain groups hoard power and information, Malone said, and people in leadership positions often seem unaware of the challenges facing these communities.

"They don't even know about what we're dealing with to even come up with solutions for marginalized people," he said.

What is the village?

"Village Talks" embraces an African and indigenous-centered understanding of the word "village," according to Lockhart.

A Cleveland, Ohio, native, Lockhart has lived in Macon for nearly a decade and serves as the secretary of the Pleasant Hill Neighborhood Organization. She also worked for Americorps and participated in a fellowship with GRIST magazine, which led her to develop an interest in environmental justice.

"Bringing back the village is, to me, bringing back this concept of the collective where every-

thing isn't so individualistic," she said.

Lockhart takes inspiration from the South African philosophy of "Ubuntu," which means, "I am because we are."

Western society focuses on the concept of "lack," in which there aren't enough resources to go around, Lockhart explained, whereas the collective believes in an abundance which can be shared by everyone.

The pair also touched on the idea of "ancestral obligation," a term they adopted from local historian Thomas Duval. Duval defined African American ancestral obligation as honoring those who came before and building upon an existing framework.

"We have people who have done a lot of this work before, just in a different form," Malone said. "It's up to us to elevate it and take it to new heights."

Accountability in the village

In their inaugural "Village Talks," Lockhart and Malone discussed accountability, asked listeners to define the term, consider who acts as enablers standing in the way of accountability and consider the difference between complaining and correcting.

"People in power feel like the people have to serve them rather than serving the people," Malone said. "Accountability is also giving the power back to the village."

Malone and Lockhart plan to begin each show with a weekly accountability check and will have a bi-weekly segment, "Mind Your Mental," which focuses on mental health in underserved communities.

The radio hosts also noted their multi-generational focus, emphasizing youth development and taking pride in one's own community.

"Sometimes people look at it like it's an achievement to leave Macon," Malone said. "Rather than, 'Hey, I can come back to my city' or 'I can do great things here in Macon.'"

In addition to garnering a range of perspectives and guest speakers, Malone said the radio show will be data-driven.

Malone and Lockhart plan to delve into Macon's long history of redlining — how, in the 1930s following the New Deal, federal housing laws specifically identified and targeted certain areas to keep people living in non-white neighbor-



Evelyn Davidson / The Melody

L.J. Malone and Tia Lockhart sit in the Glory 107.9 FM radio station studio. Their new radio show "Village Talks" gives the community an opportunity to discuss accountability and fostering positive change in Macon's Black communities.

hoods from qualifying for homeowners insurance or financial assistance like loans and mortgages — and how it and other problems have snowballed in ways that continue to affect communities today.

They pointed to research from the University of Richmond, in deeming Macon as one of the most redlined cities in America. Of Macon's residential areas, 50% is considered "hazardous" by the government agency Home Owners' Loan Corporation, which advised lenders to "refuse to make loans in these areas [or] only on a conservative basis" in surveys from 1935-40.

"A lot of people don't connect the history of redlining, the urban renewal and urban development gentrification to the things that are continuing to happen in marginalized communities," Lockhart said. "How do we connect those dots so

that way we can change policies and the way that people perceive our current conditions?"

From food deserts to housing insecurity, literacy, maternal health, the consideration of school closures and gentrification that is pricing people out of their neighborhoods, Lockhart and Malone are up for discussing any and all issues affecting the "village" that is Macon.

"When they finish listening to our radio show," Malone said. "We want them to wanna put their boots on to get out here and make a change."

Listeners can tune into "Village Talks" each Wednesday from 5:30-6:30 p.m. on The Glory 107.9 FM. Call the show's phone line anytime at 478-250-1444.

Shootings, A1:

some family members of those slain showed up at the scene hours after the shooting.

"It's always sad to see a mama and siblings fall out in the middle of the street when you break the news that their loved ones are dead," Jones said.

The four deaths bring the county's homicide death toll up to nine so far in 2025, Jones said.

Meadows' half-brother, Javarria Meadows, graduated

A violent history including gangs and crime preceded at least two of the victims' deaths.

Jedarrius Meadows Jr. was 18 when he was tried on a charge of murder related to the 2014 shooting death of 16-year-old Damion Bernard "Little Petey" Clayton at the Macon Little League ballpark on Anthony Road. The beef stemmed from a dispute over territory among rival gangs, court records show.

Meadows' half-brother, Javarria Meadows, graduated

from Howard High School and signed with Reinhardt College to play football in 2020.

Haywood had been released from prison about two months before he was killed at the Williamson Road house. Records show he had been in the county jail since 2023 on charges including aggravated assault and possession of a gun during the commission of a felony.

Haywood was initially charged in a July 2020 incident in which he and another person shot at a man. Records

show Haywood was indicted again in 2023, this time for gang and illegal gun charges.

Court documents say Haywood was carrying a concealed machine gun in January 2023 to protect himself from retribution and also to engage in retribution on behalf of his association with the Gangster Disciples. The gun and gang

charges were not prosecuted. It was unclear from court documents whether that case was dropped as part of a negotiated plea deal he agreed to in December 2024.

Haywood's plea deal was to serve five years behind bars and another 10 on probation, according to the sentence handed down in December 2024. Instead, he ended up serving about two years.

Haywood was transferred from the Bibb County jail to the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification State Prison in February, according to booking documents. After two months in the Jackson prison, he was paroled on April 2.

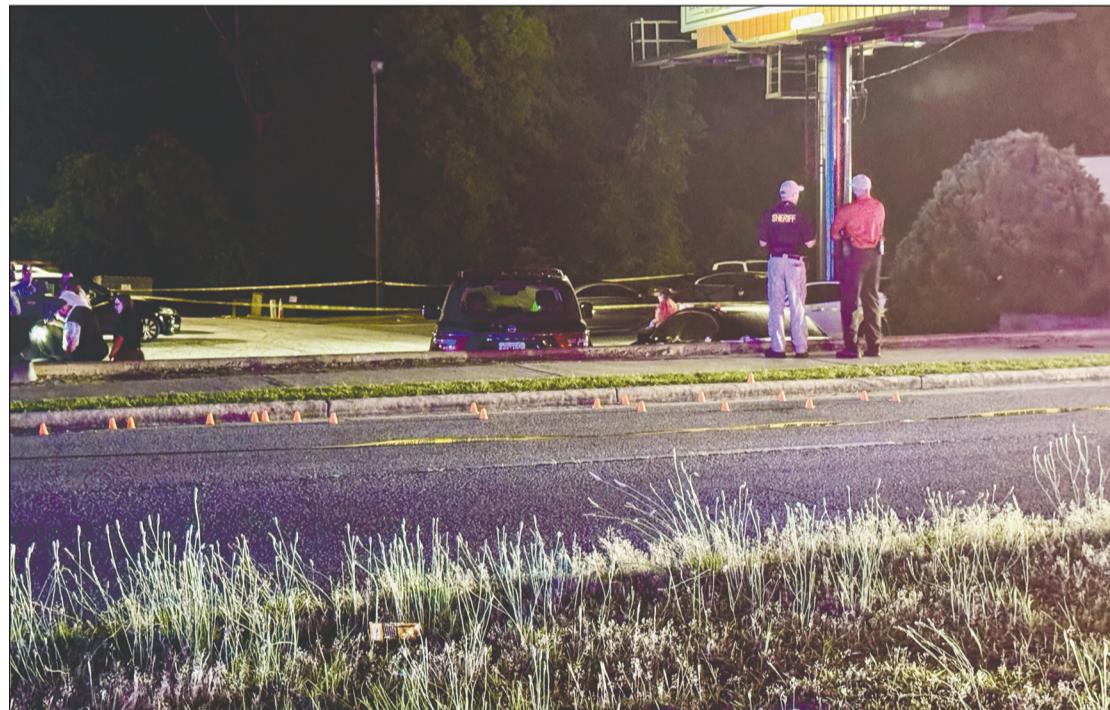


Photo courtesy Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Orange cones mark the apparent locations of shell casings near to Midtown Daquiris Bar and Grill on Log Cabin Drive in Macon, where police gathered at the scene of a mass shooting last weekend that killed four people.

Budget, A1:

Hester said he is concerned about the state of the budget in the coming years. Morton said he feared adding more fixed costs, namely the salary raises, amid "uncertain financial times."

"We know where we are right now, but we don't know where we're gonna be next year," Morton said. "I value our employees and the hard work they do and I want to reward them for that, they've earned it, I just didn't think that was the best way in our current circumstances to address that."

The school board has until June 30 to adopt the budget. If the board doesn't make the deadline, it must approve monthly expenditures.

The district also briefed board members on the rules and procedures for charter school approval. Deputy Superintendent Katika Lovett said the district has received four letters of intent, but only one school had a group petitioning to open a charter school, Infinity Academy.

Infinity Academy's petition for a local charter was not approved by the board in August due to an application that included false statements and fraudulent signatures. Lovett said it was not made clear to the district whether or not the academy sought state charter school status.

Infinity Academy's application must be due by June 9. In the meantime, the district plans to interview the school's governing board.

The board postponed voting on new legal

counsel until its next meeting. The district hired Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein LLC, as interim legal counsel and finds the Atlanta-based law firm to be the most suitable candidate.

Ficklin made a motion for the board to schedule a work session to review a proposed policy that would remove some of the board's duties, including committees. The policy, according to the district's recommendation, "removes overly prescriptive duties that make it challenging to align with established or changing protocols."

Ficklin, who serves on the personnel services committee, said he recently asked the district for an employment application for a candidate Sims had recommended hiring. It was then, Ficklin said, he learned the candidate had not submitted a written application.

Ficklin said he worries the ethics of the board could be compromised with the policy change.

"What board wants to exist without the ability to hold accountable those charged with educating the most precious resource, our children," Ficklin said. "To gut this policy is to make resistance to transparency very pronounced."

Ficklin's motion to talk about the proposed policy change at a later work session failed in a 6-2 vote with Morton and Ficklin in favor. The next board meeting is set for June 20.

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Mayor proposes new budget with no tax increase

Laura E. Corley
Accountability Reporter

The mayor proposed a budget for fiscal year 2026 including more spending without a tax increase.

"We will certainly not be raising the millage rates," Macon-Bibb County Mayor Lester Miller said. "We're in very good shape, but we're going to hold the line right now because of market uncertainty and things going on in the national arena that we can't really control."

The \$219.8 million budget Miller proposed to the county commission on Tuesday calls for maintaining the millage rate at 9.9 mills. Though the general fund budget has increased year-over-year, from \$174 million in 2022 to \$212 million last year, the mayor's presentation shows revenue from property taxes has decreased from \$80.8 million in 2022 to \$57.7 million last year.

"Despite if any (property

tax) assessment went up, Macon-Bibb County has netted \$30 million less because we have rolled the millage rate back and we continue to do so despite getting less money from our property tax," Miller said. "And how do we make that money up? We made it up through sales tax."

A public hearing on the proposed budget is set for June 3 at 5:30 p.m. It is set to be approved at the commission's June 17 meeting.

In other business Tuesday, the Log Cabin Drive daiquiri bar — where three people were killed and six others were maimed in a shooting on Sunday — was on the agenda to have its alcohol license renewed.

About a dozen people filed out of the commission chambers at city hall after the mayor said he planned to table the matter. He did not provide a reason for the delay. Federal agencies including the FBI and DEA have joined in on the in-

vestigation into the shooting at Midtown Daiquiri Bar and Grill, which is located where Francar's Wings once was on the west side of town.

Also Tuesday, the county voted to settle an undisclosed legal matter for \$200,000. No other details about the settlement were available.

The county commission also voted on other items including:

• Acceptance of a \$34,800 Knight Foundation grant to hire North Carolina-based Raffelis Financial Consultants Inc. to help the county recruit a new chief IT officer.

• Acceptance of a \$144,971 grant from the state Justice Coordinating Council for the Juvenile Court Judge.

• Authorization for the mayor to contract with Accord

Technologies two Cisco gateway firewall upgrades at a cost of \$168,415 to be paid for with I.T. department money.

• A contract with Illinois-based CDW Government LLC Computer for a web administrator consultant to be paid for with \$40,000 in general funds.

Tubman, A1:

company Derek's Doodles, contributed art to the collaborative visual story being told through the exhibit.

"I want to break free of all negativities on how so many people view me because I am more than a diagnosis," he told folks at the opening exhibit.

King expressed hope for the exhibit to shift visitors' perceptions of those who are deemed different and encourage folks to find a common thread.

"[People with disabilities] are the normal people of our society," James Butler told the audience at the museum Sunday. "We wear faces, y'all. They don't. They are who they are."

Butler is a land surveyor for Lamar County and also serves as a member of the Community Advisory Council at Georgia State University's Center for Leadership in Disability.

Fiber artist Beth Mount has six "Spirit Keeper" quilts featured in the "Embracing Possibility" exhibit.

Mount coined the term "Spirit Keeper" to describe how her quilts are meant to strengthen and radiate people's spirit out to the community.

"That is what I felt called to do with my

artistry," she said of the African-American story quilting tradition.

Much of her work is a collaborative effort of "untold stories being woven together."

One quilt displayed on the first floor of the museum features the work of 40 different people. Mount's "Cultivating Support Quilt" includes a border of hand prints, each quilted by a different direct support staff member who helps people with disabilities.

The work people have done in Georgia has had influence all over the world, but it's easy not to see that, and it's easy not to know the story," she said, especially the stories of African-Americans.

Mount, who grew up in Georgia and has lived in New York City for three decades, has a background in person-centered planning for individuals with disabilities. Person-centered planning is a visual life planning process which helps people hone in on their strengths, aspirations and potential.

Part of the exhibit features people with disabilities highlighted in a visual display made of yarn, including MAPS (Making Action Plans) and PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope).

Naomi Williams' son, Noah, is featured on the PATH board. Noah is an abstract

artist and endurance athlete who has spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy.

A book series, sold at the Tubman Museum's gift shop his grandmother wrote called Adventures in Noahland tells the story of his accomplishments and his life with his mother.

"He does the same things as others, he just does it differently," Naomi said of the first "Adventures in Noahland" book theme.

The books are meant to help kids open up and have conversations about the disabilities community.

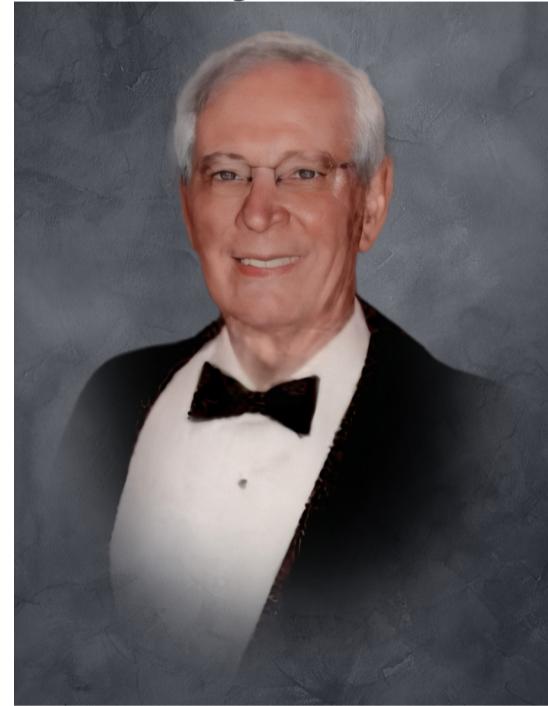
"It's giving people a platform of not being afraid or ashamed and a place where they can say, 'Oh well, I know somebody like that, too,'" she said.

Naomi said she felt encouraged by the large turnout of people at the exhibit's opening ceremony.

"That has really restored a piece of me and given me a little bit more faith in humanity — in believing that as Noah becomes an adult with disabilities that he will be okay," Naomi said.

"Embracing Possibility" will be on display at the Tubman Museum from now until June 16, 2026. There will be related workshops, book readings, activities and community mural making throughout the year.

Warren Kedric Scoville, Sr. January 24, 1936 – March 20, 2025



Warren Kedric Scoville, Sr., 89, of Griffin, Georgia, passed away Thursday, March 20, 2025.

Warren was born in Miami, FL on January 24, 1936, and grew up in Macon, Georgia.

He is preceded in death by his father, Virgil Hoyle Scoville, his mother Martha Claire Moseley Scoville, and an infant son.

Warren had a long and rewarding career in the financial world, beginning with Retail Credit in Macon, Georgia, followed by specialized training from Trust Company run by Mr. Wyche Evans Bruner (becoming one of "Bruner's Brats") before working for First National Bank of Griffin (Vice-President), then moving his family to Thomson, Georgia in 1971 for an opportunity with the Bank of Thomson (President), returning to Griffin five years later in 1976 to work for National Bank of Georgia (commuting daily from Griffin to Atlanta), then working with Commercial Bank (later becoming First Union) (President), and ended his career with United Bank of Griffin (President).

Warren was a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army and attended Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, where he met the love of his life, Lena Ann Chaplin from Columbus, Georgia, on a fortuitous blind date. They married on October 17, 1959, and celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary in 2024.

He graduated from Mercer University in 1958 with a B.A. from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and was a Brother of Kappa Chapter of the Kappa Alpha Order at Mercer University.

Warren was active in many organizations and was recognized for his leadership roles, volunteer work, and commitment to the local communities in Macon, Thomson, and Griffin including Rotary, FUMC Men's Bible Class, Griffin Development Authority (and was instrumental in bringing

Caterpillar to Griffin), Chairman of the Griffin Spalding Chamber of Commerce in 2002 and named General Griffin in 1999, active with the United Way of Thomson, President of the Exchange Club of Griffin (and their "Man of the Year" in 1994), Griffin-Spalding Historical Society, The Deck Club, among others.

In 2002, Ann and Warren bought a second home on Black Island in Darien, Georgia and spent many happy years "on the coast" before eventually selling it in 2022 and returning full-time to Griffin.

Warren is survived by his wife, Lena Ann Chaplin Scoville; daughter Susan Land Scoville Morris (Hugh) of Winter Park, Florida; daughter Lena Ansley Scoville of Brunswick, Georgia; daughter Ann Chartrand Scoville of Greenville, Georgia; son Kedrick Fitzgerald (Addie) of Mason, Ohio; sister Virginia Scoville McClure (Albert "Mac") of Macon, Georgia; grandchildren Jesse "Jay" Carl Smith, V (Elizabeth) of Washington, DC; Alexandra Price Morris of Washington, DC; Jack Fitzgerald, Madison Fitzgerald, and Will Fitzgerald of Mason, Ohio; nephew Darin McClure (Keena and children Madeline and Henry) of Macon, Georgia; niece Jennifer McClure of Seattle, Washington; nephew Jeffrey "Jeff" McClure (Tonya and children Chase and Lawson) of Macon, Georgia.

Things that gave Warren the most joy include spending time with his family, working hard at whatever job he had (whether it was at a bank or doing yardwork at home), taking his children and grandchildren out to "The Farm" on Tomochichi Rd in Griffin to fish on the lake and being outdoors at the creek, watching news and sports, reading and learning about history, traveling with Ann to see their son play high school and college football, and spending time with "his dog", Peaches, who turned out to be one of the best Jack Russell terriers ever. He had a great sense of humor and will be deeply missed by his family and friends and those in the community who knew him.

Warren will be cremated and laid to rest in the First United Methodist Church Memorial Garden. A Celebration of Life will be held on Friday, May 23, 2025, with a visitation at 10am, service at 11am, and reception at noon at the First United Methodist Church, 1401 Maple Drive, Griffin, GA 30224. The service will be live streamed on the Griffin First United Methodist Church Facebook page and will also be available as a recording for later viewing.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to a charity or organization of your choice in Warren's memory.

Conner-Westbury Funeral Home, 1891 W. McIntosh Road, is in charge of arrangements.

Please join the family and friends in honoring the life of Warren Kedric Scoville, Sr. by visiting www.conner-westburyfuneralhome.com and posting your tributes and memories.

agement services through its Adult Readiness Program for \$135,000 using American Rescue Plan grant money

• The sale of 4 acres at 151 Madison St. to the Macon Housing Authority for \$500,000

• The purchase of Verkada security cameras at Frankie E. Lewis and Cliffview parks for \$245,366 from Marietta-based Southern Computer Warehouse

• Approval to authorize the mayor to enter into an independent contractor agreement with Macon Area Habitat for Humanity Inc. to provide \$352,703 in Home Investment Partnership Program funds for the construction of three new single-family homes at 1271 Holt Avenue, 1141 Huguenin Avenue and 4286 Worsham Avenue.

• New playground equipment for Tattnall Square Park from Texas-based Kompan Inc. for \$150,687 in capital improvement funds.

Sales Manager

Sales Manager: (Macon, GA):

Develop & execute strategic plans

to achieve sales targets.

Req: HS diploma/GED

(or its foreign equiv)

+ 24 mo of exp in job offered or

as sales support manager.

Must submit to drug & background

screenings.

Mail resume to Serena Wholesale Inc at 3840 Bloomfield Village Dr, Macon, GA 31206.

National Supply Chain Director: (Macon, GA):

Review & analyze existing supply chain processes & make recommendations to mgmt.

Req: bachelor's degree

(or its foreign equiv or any combo of foreign edu)

in supply chain mgmt, logistics, materials

or a closely related field +

24 mo of exp in job offered

or in position performing inventory control.

Mail resume to Sunrise Wholesale LLC at 3760 Bloomfield Village Dr, Macon, GA 31206.

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Opinion

Lilla Godfrey, the 'Prayer and Dime Mother', reached those who served all over the world

Lilla Godfrey never thought of herself as anything more than an "ordinary housewife" from Macon.

But there was a time when her fame stretched across three continents. Soldiers would send her thank-you notes from the top bunks in Army barracks and from below the decks of aircraft carriers.

"Did you know you are the most famous woman in the world?" one wrote. "I heard about you in China, Japan, in India and all the other countries."

From the beginning of World War II through the post-war years of Vietnam, she delivered handwritten prayers to U.S. servicemen.

Inside each one, she wrapped a dime.

The prayers all contained the same heartfelt words, written in cursive. "I am praying for you, wherever you go. Keep this as a reminder to pray."

At the bottom she listed a number. The final count totaled more



Ed Grisamore

than 17,000 over 38 years.

She said the 10-cent piece — the tiniest of American coins — was not a payment but a contract. After all, the words "In God We Trust" are stamped under the chin of Lady Liberty and (after 1945) President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Some soldiers punched tiny holes in the coins and wore them around their necks with their dog tags. A World War II flight crew honored her by naming its plane "Prayer Mother." Back home in Macon, a man who had lost his legs in combat made a sign for her front yard that read: "Prayer and Dime Mother."

Paramount News filmed her story and showed it on newsreels at movie theaters across the country. She received letters of commendation from four U.S. presidents and words of gratitude from Winston Churchill and Art Linkletter. She was featured on a national radio program called "Good Neighbor of the Day."

And 50 years ago last month — on April 6, 1975 — Mayor Ronnie Thompson issued a proclamation making it "Lilla Godfrey Day" in Macon. She was recognized at a ceremony at her church, Centenary United Methodist, where she was once described as a "little Methodist woman with an oversized missionary heart."

When her sons, Alva and Cecil, boarded a train at Macon's Terminal Station and went off to fight in the war, she went home and prayed: "Lord, let me do something for these other boys if I can't have mine with me."

She pulled a dime out of her grocery money and wrapped it inside a prayerful note. She handed it to a soldier standing in front of the Woolworth's on Cherry Street. She told him to "keep this forever" and hurried away.

Soon, she began distributing prayers and dimes to soldiers stationed at nearby Camp Wheeler. She would seek out men in military uniforms at bus stations and press the folded paper into their palms.

The Godfreys were not a family of great financial means. Before

her husband, R.A. Godfrey, became an electrician, he was making \$18 a week working as a movie projectionist at the Palace Theater on Cherry Street.

He was unaware of her ongoing project until after she had given out more than 3,000 "prayers and dimes." When word spread of her efforts, local businesses began campaigns to collect coins for her.

Her most fervent prayers were always reserved for her sons. She asked churches in Macon to include them on their prayer lists.

Cecil enlisted in the Navy in January 1942 and served on the gunnery crews of ships. Alva signed up for the 121st Infantry "Blue Bonnets" out of Macon in September 1940.

He was wounded in France. He was shot in his legs and hands and received shrapnel wounds in his head. He spent six months in a hospital in London and was later awarded the Purple Heart.

During his time in the London hospital, a soldier in the bed next to him, who had shrapnel in his lungs, showed Alva the dime Lilla Godfrey had sent him.

Her sons did return home safely after the war, but more than 400,000 Americans lost their lives in WWII. Red Cross officials contacted Godfrey a few times to see if she could help identify a soldier who died in combat after the only clue to their identity was a dime wrapped in a prayer and stuffed in their pockets.

But it was impossible. She had only tracked the numbers she had given out, not the names of the recipients.

Her mission marched through two more wars — Korea and Vietnam. She took cups and dishes out of her China cabinet to display some of the letters and photographs she received over the years.

After she died in June 1983, Alva opened a letter that had been sent to him by a WWII veteran in Dublin.

He still had the dime the little lady in Macon had given him.

Ed Grisamore has been a newspaper columnist in Macon for more than 45 years and is the author of nine books.

GDOT drops dreaded four-letter word: R-A-I-L

Georgia's Department of Transportation doesn't generally grab headlines, but when it does, it's often bad news. When I read the latest from GDOT, I could hear a collective groan from government watchdogs as GDOT dropped the dreaded four-letter-word: R-A-I-L, presumably of the publicly-funded variety.

"By the middle of the next decade, Georgians may be able to travel between Atlanta and Savannah by high-speed rail, avoiding traffic and expensive air fares," reports the Capitol Beat News Service. "The state Department of Transportation has launched a study of the feasibility of connecting the two urban centers with an intercity passenger rail line."

At first glance, this may sound like an exciting proposition for anyone who travels to Savannah from the metro Atlanta area. I am not a fan of long road trips, and even when there is no traffic, that is about a four-hour drive. If you'd rather fly, it generally costs around \$200 with Delta Airlines, although it can reach over \$400.

A high-speed train that cruises at over 125 mph and bypasses traffic congestion seems like a viable alternative, and it sounds like GDOT has already made up its mind, regardless of the feasibility study's findings. "[Director of GDOT's Intermodal Division Clement] Solomon said the DOT likely will opt for high-speed rail as the preferred technology because that's

what the public wants," according to the Capitol Beat News Service.

How Solomon knows what the public wants when the first stakeholder meetings have just begun is beyond me. I'd venture to say that when the public learns how much this will cost and how terrible the implementation has been elsewhere in the country, it will be clear that the public has no appetite for publicly-funded high-speed rail.

For starters, nobody knows how much this will cost and where the money will come from. "[GDOT] hasn't identified funding sources for the project, beyond \$10 million in planning money for the study — an \$8 million grant from the Federal Railroad Administration and a \$2 million state match," the Capitol News Beat Service explained. It is mind-boggling and an utter waste that this study will cost taxpayers an astounding \$10 million dollars, but never mind that.

If Georgians want to know what a publicly-funded high-speed passenger rail system might look like, then consider California's miserable experience. "Voters first approved a high-speed rail proposal in 2008 that would connect Los Angeles to San Francisco by 2020," writes the Los Angeles Times.

"That end date has changed considerably

over time. There is no set timeline for when anyone will be able to ride the entire 494-mile stretch from Anaheim to San Francisco. The current focus centers on the Central Valley, where officials estimate the 171-mile line from Merced to Bakersfield will be finished between 2030 and 2033."

Will it ever be finished? Californians should hope not based on the price alone. "Officials estimate it could cost about \$35 billion to finish the first line from Bakersfield to Merced and roughly \$100 billion more to complete the route from Los Angeles to San Francisco — about \$100 billion more than what was originally proposed years ago," reported the Los Angeles Times. In short, Californians are paying for a Porsche but received a broken down Pinto.

Perhaps the Peach State will fare differently, but no matter the cost, I can't imagine that people from Newnan to Augusta and Rome to Valdosta will want to pay for a service that doesn't benefit them. There's also the problem of whether the proposed passenger rail system might hurt business and impede freight trains servicing the Savannah port.

Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce chief Bert Brantley even warned, "It's not the no-brainer people might assume [...] We have to

be very careful. We don't want to create a benefit that comes at the expense of jobs, growth, and new investment."

Despite my criticism of publicly-funded passenger rail proposals, I don't oppose passenger rail in concept. In fact, I like it and have used it many times in Europe where there is an extensive, in-demand rail system that services millions of people. It connects just about every sizable city and even competes with air travel — helping to drive prices down — but Georgia and Europe are very different places.

It will be years before GDOT completes its over-priced, taxpayer-funded feasibility study on an Atlanta-to-Savannah high-speed rail line. When it is done, I am sure the report will talk about the miracles of such a development, and if the line is somehow privately funded, then I am fully in support. However, if officials want to build it using taxpayer money, then they ought to remember California's ongoing experience.

Since this is a family-oriented newspaper, I will refrain from using any four-letter-words to sum up my feelings on a publicly-funded high-speed rail system and simply stick with three letters: U-G-H.

Marc Hyden is the director of state government affairs at the R Street Institute. You can follow him on X at @marc_hyden.



Marc Hyden

The Macon Melody

Bibb County's Community News Source

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The Macon Melody is a community newspaper that connects Maconites to all the stories of Bibb County. Our staff lives, works, and plays here. We know Middle Georgia, and our reporting illuminates and celebrates what makes this area special.

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Yellow jackets, fire ants and other things that want to kill you

The weather is gradually improving, and the great outdoors continually calls out to me, luring me from my windowless dungeon. I manage to escape the shackles of work sometimes, and what little free time my schedule allows has been spent tending to my yard and gardens.

You can get a lot of thinking done while sitting on a lawn mower or trimming the hedges in front of the house. Legend has it that there are Zen Buddhist monks in the Far East who get all their exercise through tending their gardens. During their chores the monks mentally focus on different muscle groups, allegedly getting the same results as spending hours in the gym.

I don't think sitting on a piece of loud equipment with a beer between your legs could ever be counted as exercise though. Probably not what the monks had in mind.

In all seriousness, I consider myself fortunate to have a piece of land to care for. Spending time outside is good for the mind, body and soul. Whether in a small yard in the city or a sprawling country estate, there is no better way to connect with nature than with a little sweat.

But being in tune with the earth can be a bit painful. Last year there was an incident with ground-nesting yellow jackets. These angry little creatures get very excited with the vibrations and fumes that accompany yard care equipment. One minute you're minding your own business and the next you're being stabbed to death by



Kyle Dominy

flying assassins wielding razor sharp knives. The mower wasn't fast enough, so I bailed out and ran for cover.

While fleeing for safety I ran through a spiderweb large enough to entrap a chimpanzee. One hand was swatting at my airborne assailants, while the other pulled at the invisible strings clinging to my body.

My forearm had picked up a passenger in the form of a garden spider with legs long enough to wrap around my forearm, which I didn't see until it took a bite of my tender, vulnerable flesh.

I ran until my legs could move no more and stood, panting like a savage animal on the run. I could feel the toxic venom pulsing through my veins, the sting and bite sites throbbing in pain. I tried to catch my breath and assess my wounds. Before I could see how damaged I was, I felt a burning sensation on my leg. I looked down in dismay to see that I had come to rest in a nest of fire ants.

I brushed them off to the best of my ability, receiving more stings on my hands. I made it back to the house, the mower abandoned somewhere along my driveway. I'd have to go back and get it later. The following days were a blur, lost in the haze of a steady regiment of antihistamine.

The more I think about it, I believe I'll stay inside more this summer.

Summer smarts: How artificial intelligence can help families make the most of the season



Joe Finkelstein

Summer has arrived in Middle Georgia. School's out, the sun's up and families are gearing up for a season full of potential. But let's be honest, summer can also get chaotic. Between trying to entertain the kids, plan meals, organize outings and preserve some semblance of structure, the "lazy days of summer" can quickly feel overwhelming. Luckily, artificial intelligence (AI) is stepping in as an unexpected but very welcome assistant.

You don't need to be a tech expert to tap into AI's benefits. With just a smartphone or tablet and a few well-chosen apps, families can discover local adventures, whip up creative meals, keep kids learning and entertained and even turn memories into beautiful keepsakes. Here are some ways AI can help your family have a smarter, more enjoyable summer without even leaving town.

Day trips made easy

Not every family is heading to the beach or mountains this summer and that's okay. Sometimes, the best adventures are right in your own backyard. AI can help you find them.

Apps like Google Maps and Eventbrite use AI to suggest nearby activities based on your location

and interests. Whether it's a children's museum, a pop-up festival or a shaded walking trail you've never explored, these apps curate options that are close, affordable and fun for the whole family.

Want to avoid the crowds or make the most of a cloudy day? Weather-integrated AI apps can help you plan around the forecast, while tools like Yelp and TripAdvisor now use AI-generated summaries to highlight family-friendly local attractions.

Let AI be your sous chef

Dinner planning in the summer can feel like an endless loop of "What do we have?" and "Do we have to eat that again?" Enter AI-powered meal planners. Apps like Mealime and Whisk offer a brilliant solution: enter the ingredients you already have and the app will suggest meals your family might love. AI can even account for dietary restrictions, picky eaters and time limits.

Many of these tools go a step further, generating shopping lists and even connecting with grocery delivery services. And if your kids like helping in the kitchen, some apps offer step-by-step visual instructions that feel more like an interactive game than a chore.

Want to shake things up? Try an

AI chatbot like ChatGPT to plan a "theme night." For example: "Make me a Hawaiian-themed dinner menu with music and games for a family of four." You might just create a new tradition.

Creative projects and DIY magic

When it's too hot to be outside or you're just trying to keep screen time in check, AI can help you unlock hours of meaningful, creative fun.

Apps like Canva for Education, Tinkercad and Khan Academy Kids offer AI-enhanced tools for drawing, building and learning. Canva's AI tools can guide your children through designing their own summer postcards or posters. Tinkercad lets them dip their toes into 3D design and engineering (even without a 3D printer), while Khan Academy's AI tutor helps reinforce school-year learning in a gamified, personalized way.

AI can also suggest family-friendly science experiments, art projects or journaling prompts. Tools like ChatGPT, Copilot or Gemini allow you to input basic details like your kids' ages or interests and receive tailored activity ideas that spark curiosity without adding to your to-do list.

Family memories, upgraded

Summer memories fade fast unless they're captured and that's

where AI tools shine. Google Photos, Apple Photos and Adobe Express use AI to automatically group your photos by date, location or even who's in them. They can suggest the best shots, remove blurry images and even generate highlight videos complete with music and captions.

Want something you can hold in your hands? Services like Chatbooks or Shutterfly now incorporate AI to help you create beautiful printed photo books in minutes, automatically selecting layouts, writing playful captions and organizing your memories into a professional-looking design.

If your kids are into storytelling, you can go a step further and use AI to create a custom digital storybook. Feed a few photos and a short description into tools like Storybird or even ChatGPT paired with image generators, and you've got the foundation for a bedtime tale starring your own family.

Managing the madness

Even with all the fun, summer still needs some structure and AI can help. Voice assistants like Alexa, Google Assistant and Siri can become your family's digital camp counselor, helping with daily routines, setting reminders for sunscreen and hydration or even organizing chores with reward systems.

Smart speakers can also be programmed to suggest a daily activity

or prompt. For example, "Hey Google, give us a family fun idea for today" might return a suggestion like a dance party, scavenger hunt or backyard picnic.

For teens and tweens with phones or tablets, AI calendar tools like TimeHero or Clockwise can encourage time management and goal setting, gently nudging them to mix fun with productivity — even during summer break.

Smart tech for a simple summer

AI isn't about turning summer into a science project. It's about working smarter, not harder, to carve out more moments of joy, connection and discovery. With just a handful of tools, families can enhance their summers without over-scheduling or over-spending.

So whether you're planning day trips around Macon, throwing together a last-minute dinner with pantry staples or helping your kids create a comic book about their backyard adventures, consider letting AI do some of the heavy lifting. You might just find that a smarter summer is a happier summer.

Joe Finkelstein (AI Joe) has been a technology educator in Bibb County for more than 20 years. For questions and comments visit askajoe.com

Memorial, from A1:

the USS Arizona in casualties. Another 61 were wounded. The surprise attack, which led to America's entry into World War II, left 2,402 dead and 1,282 wounded.

Vining was a quiet man, though large in stature. He often stuttered when he spoke. His middle name was Eugene, after his father, who died in 1922 when Vining was a child. The elder Vining was a World War I veteran who never fully recovered from his war injuries.

Vining joined the Navy after attending L.H. Williams Elementary and Ballard High School. He had a sense of adventure and loved to travel. He was sent to basic training in Norfolk, Virginia, before receiving orders to report to Pearl Harbor, where about 60,000 military personnel were stationed.

He was the first person from Macon to lose his life in World War II. There are 303 Bibb County residents listed as WWII casualties at the Veterans Memorial Monument outside the Macon Coliseum.

Most of those who died at Pearl Harbor were buried in Hawaii.

Two years after the war ended, at the request of Vining's mother, his body was returned to Macon. The flag-draped casket arrived by train at Terminal Station on October 21, 1947.

Vining is buried at Macon's historic Linwood Cemetery in the Pleasant Hill neighborhood. In the late 1940s, the Vining-Goodman American Legion Post 501 was dedicated to both him and Robert Goodman, another black serviceman who died in the war. (The post has since closed.) The Vining Heights neighborhood, which includes Vining Circle, is named after Vining.

Jerome "Jerry" Blumberg

Jerome "Jerry" Blumberg was the oldest of Reuben and Alice Blumberg's five children. The family owned and operated a jewelry store in downtown Macon. They lived on The Prado.

Blumberg was a member of the 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion during World War II. When he wrote letters home, his words were often filled with hope. Other times, you could read the fear between the lines. He concluded his letters with "It is almost over, and I will see you soon."

The war was indeed drawing to a close in late February 1945. In another six weeks, both Hitler and Mussolini would be dead. In another two months, Germany would offer its unconditional surrender.

But Blumberg's life ended on February 28, 1945, along the Roer River in Belgium.

Blumberg was 26 years old. His body was never returned home. He is among the 7,992 soldiers buried at the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery and Memorial in Belgium, where rows of headstones softly sweep across the countryside.

Most are the shape of white crosses, which is what distinguishes Blumberg's 3-foot marker from the others. It represents the Star of David, the six-pointed symbol of the Jewish faith.

Thomas Jefferson "Sugar Boy" Barksdale

Thomas Jefferson "Sugar Boy" Barksdale took his last breath in a foxhole in North Korea on a December day in 1950, as the cold winds swept across the snow-covered hills along the Chongchon River.

It was almost 50 years before his skeletal remains were found, and another nine years before Army forensic officials located a family member living in Macon to make a positive identification through DNA testing.

It took an additional three years to bring

him home in July 2012. His funeral was on a sweltering Georgia summer day. His flag-draped casket made the eight-hour flight from Honolulu. It arrived at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport shortly after dawn. The black hearse was escorted down Interstate 75 by the Georgia State Patrol, Bibb County Sheriff's deputies, the Macon Police Department and 87 Georgia Patriot Guard Riders on motorcycles. The motorcade was a half-mile long.

He grew up on Boone Street in Macon's Fort Hill. He was the second youngest of Ben and Vilena Barksdale's 11 children. No one could recall how he got the nickname "Sugar Boy," except that he carried it with him to the other side of the world as a 21-year-old soldier.

He was on the front lines with the 503rd Field Artillery Battalion of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division. He was killed after engaging in heavy fighting with Chinese forces.

When he was initially listed as missing in action, his family clung to the hope he might be found. But for those family members who were still living all those years later, closure did not come until August 2000. Military excavation teams from the U.S. and North Korea uncovered the human skeleton of a 5-foot-10 male along a hilltop about 50 miles north of the capital of Pyongyang.

At the funeral home on Millerfield Road in East Macon, American flags lined the driveway. There were 62 of them — one for every year it had been since Barksdale's death. Seven members of the Georgia Army National Guard carried the casket inside, where it remained in state for four days until the funeral. Barksdale was buried, with full military honors, at the Georgia Veterans Cemetery in Milledgeville.

Eddie Brown Jr.

Eddie Brown's name scrolls past at the end of the film credits in the 2002 movie "We Were Soldiers," starring Mel Gibson. The movie tells the story of members of the "Lost Platoon," who died in the famous battle of Ia Drang Valley in Vietnam.

The Valley of Death, as it was later called, was located in South Vietnam's Central Highlands, near the Cambodian border and Ho Chi Minh Trail.

There, 450 U.S. troops squared off against some 2,000 North Vietnamese in the first major battle of the longest war ever fought by the United States. There were 237 men killed — almost half the platoon.

Brown was Macon's first casualty in Vietnam. He was 25 when he died on Nov. 16, 1965, two days after the fighting began.

He grew up the oldest of seven children in a house on Society Street in the Fort Hill neighborhood. He dropped out of high school at Peter G. Appling (now Northeast) to work odd jobs to help his family. One of those jobs was working as a caddie at Bowden Municipal Golf Course.

Six months after his death, Brown was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star in a ceremony at his grave site in Woodlawn Memorial Park off Gray Highway in northeast Macon.

Sgt. Kelley Courtney

Macon Marine Sgt. Kelley Courtney was a 28-year-old counterintelligence officer who was one of eight Marines killed when a convoy truck was struck by a suicide bomber outside of Fallujah on October 30, 2004.

He was the first serviceman from Macon to die in action since the Vietnam War. He left behind a wife and two children.

After earning his GED, he took classes at Central Georgia Tech. His father had been in the Air Force, and Courtney made an appointment to see a recruiter. But the Air Force officer was a no-show, and a Marine

recruiter noticed Kelley standing outside and invited him into his office. He became interested in counterintelligence and went through training in Beaufort, South Carolina, and Dam Neck, Virginia.

Courtney had only been in Iraq for six weeks when he told his family that he would be taking part in an extensive, weeklong mission. The American forces had been in Fallujah for less than six months, and the insurgent activity was at its peak. He confided in his family that it would be like going into a "hornet's nest."

His mother, Gena, was watching the evening news when it was reported that eight Marines had been killed outside of Fallujah. There were images of black smoke on the TV. The following day, a U.S. government car

pulled into the driveway and three notification officers arrived to bring the sad news.

There were two funerals. The first was on November 14, 2004, just three days after Veterans Day, at Glen Haven Memorial Gardens on Houston Road. The procession was lined with people waving flags and holding "God Bless America" signs. There was a flag-draped casket and a 21-gun salute.

In April 2006, the new Marines counterintelligence building at Camp Hansen in Okinawa, Japan, was named Courtney Hall. Eighteen months later, the I-75 interchange at Hartley Bridge Road (Exit 155) was dedicated in his honor.

His father, Bobby Courtney, died in 2023... on Veteran's Day.

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Events

Abandoned Roots Artistry Launch Party, Pop-up Exhibit and Paint Workshop

Saturday, May 24

3 p.m.

120 New St.

Be a part of the launch party for Abandoned Roots Artistry at Satterfields BBQ for an afternoon filled with creativity. Come see the pop-up exhibit for free and check out the silent auction items. Attendees can also participate in a painting workshop. Reminisce about the good ol' summer days of peace, love and understanding while painting a fun VW Beetle. No artistic experience required. Tickets are \$35 and include a delicious Satterfields BBQ box meal.

"Songs with Friends:" a Macon Pops Singalong Concert

Saturday, May 24

6 p.m.

4182 Forsyth Road

Macon Pops is turning up the volume on summer fun this Memorial Day Weekend with its first-ever sing-along concert, Songs with Friends, happening at the Macon Museum of Arts & Sciences. This interactive, family-friendly event invites the entire community to sing their hearts out alongside live performances of classic favorites and modern hits – led by some of Macon Pops' most beloved artists. Tickets available now at MaconPops.com and on social media @MaconPops. This is more than a concert – it's a community celebration, complete with Fall Line Brewing Co. drinks for purchase, Everything Gelato, free popsicles, a sandbox, bubbles and coloring station for kids. Kids 5 and under are FREE, Ages 6-12 \$10. Museum members can grab a Family Package (2 adults + 4 kids) for \$70.

Will Stewart at Grant's Lounge

Saturday, May 24

9 p.m.

576 Poplar St.

As one of the brightest and most prolific new songwriters to emerge from the Birmingham music scene over the past few years, Will Stewart has made a name for himself as both an imaginative storyteller and six string gunslinger whose detailed accounts of life around the Deep South seem to capture the essence of not just the humid, kudzu-covered environs they come out of, but also the creative cultural milieu that makes such narratives possible in the first place. Taking cues from everyone from Big Star and R.E.M., to Phosphorescent and the Drive-By Truckers, and even classic Southern literary figures like Eudora Welty and Barry Hannah, Stewart has managed to carve out a place for himself as a conjurer of time, place and characters – and the stories that swirl around them – in a way that's simultaneously reflective, empathetic and unapologetic in their presentation.

Opening of Angels in America at Theatre Macon

Friday, May 30

8 p.m.

438 Cherry St.

Set in 1980's New York City, a gay man is abandoned by his lover when he contracts the AIDS virus, and a closeted Mormon lawyer's marriage to his pill-popping wife stalls. Other characters include the infamous McCarthyite lawyer Roy Cohn, Ethel Rosenberg, a former drag queen who works as a nurse, and an angel. The show will run for two weekends.

The Metropolitan Opera Presents: II Barbiere Di Siviglia (Rossini)

Saturday, May 31

12:55 p.m.

355 MLK Jr. Blvd.

Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducts his first Met performances of Strauss's white-hot one-act tragedy. Claus Guth, one of Europe's leading opera directors, gives the biblical story – already filtered through the beautiful and strange imagination of Oscar Wilde's play – a psychologically perceptive Victorian-era setting rich in symbolism and subtle shades of darkness and light. Headlining the new staging is soprano Elza van den Heever as the abused and unhinged anti-heroine, who demands the head of Jochanaan, sung by celebrated baritone Peter Mattei. Tenor Gerhard Siegel is Salomé's lecherous stepfather, King Herod, with mezzo-soprano Michelle DeYoung as his wife, Herodias, and tenor Piotr Buszewski as Narraboth. \$25 General / \$20 Seniors / \$15 Students

Watercolor Travel Journaling Class

Tuesday, June 3

6 p.m.

456 First St.

Learn how to capture memories with watercolor in this 4-week class at The 567 Center for Renewal. Instructor Kari Waltz will guide you step-by-step to draw and paint images in your own small travel journal.

Urban Sketching is one form of this process, and if you have ever wanted to sketch while you are exploring a new destination, then this class is for you. Kari will show you a variety of methods to simplify the scene and different ways to start an entry. You'll learn about the essentials for making your own watercolor kit for traveling, brush up on the basics of painting in watercolor, and refine drawing techniques to give you more confidence. The cost for the entire course is \$205 for non-members, \$175 for 567 members, and includes a small blank journal, your paint brush and all other travel kit supplies for you to keep. The class is limited to 8 people for more individual attention. It will meet Tuesdays, starting June 3. Ages 16 and up. Register online or call (478) 238-6051.

Macon Area Connections: Mingle with Singles at Macon Bacon

Tuesday, June 3

6 p.m.

Willie Smokie Glover Drive

Ages 21 - 45... Are you ready to play the field? Whether you're single, taken or just here to make friends, MAC (Macon Area Connections) is hosting a night you won't want to miss at Luther Williams Field. MAC will kick things off at the Beer Garden with a fun icebreaker activity, then head to the stands to cheer on the Macon Bacon together. You might even get to first base... in pickleball terms, of course. Each guest gets a color-coded wristband to show relationship status and attractions, so things are clear from the start. \$20 includes: Entry to the game, one drink ticket, Macon Bacon hat, all-you-can-eat food. This night is perfect for meeting new people, whether you're new to Macon or just looking to expand your circle.

Planting, maintaining color with annual flowers in the landscape



Provided by Paul Thomas

Gazania is a perennial but can be used as an annual plant. This flower can survive in hot and dry environments. Gazanias come in a variety of bright colors, including yellow, gold, orange, pink and red.

Last week I talked about the great, colorful annual plants available to add a little pizzazz to your summer plantings. Selecting the colors, shapes and textures you love is likely the easy part. Getting them properly planted and looking nice throughout the growing season requires a little more work.



Kathy Hensley

When planting a flower bed, consider the mature height of the annuals you have chosen. Place taller plants in the back of the bed and trailing plants at the front. To draw attention with a sweep of color, use a larger quantity of only a few types of annuals. Be sure to group annuals with similar environmental needs together.

Proper bed preparation is important for the best performance of color annuals. This will help them to develop strong, healthy root systems, enabling the plants to better resist pests and environmental challenges. Add 2-4 inches of organic matter, such as compost, soil conditioner or aged animal manure, along with fertilizer, ideally from a soil test recommendation. Work these amendments into the soil to a depth of 8-12 inches.

In absence of a soil test, use a balanced fertilizer (such as

10-10-10) at the rate of one pound per 100 square feet. This will need to be reapplied every six weeks during the growing season. While slow-release fertilizers may cost a little more, they can meet the nutritional needs of annual flowers for

a much longer time. Another advantage is that they provide a more even uptake of nutrients by the plants, resulting in a more uniform growth rate.

One caution, however, is that they can be depleted faster in wet seasons with high soil temperatures. In that case, annual plants may need a fertilizer boost late in the season to continue their color show. Follow the product label for rate information.

When planting, carefully remove plants from the containers and position the tops of their root balls even with the surface of the soil. It is important to space the plants according to their mature size found on the plant tag, rather than their current size. Then apply 2-3 inches of mulch, such as pine bark mini-nuggets or pine straw, as a weed barrier and to help control moisture.

Water thoroughly at planting. It is recommended to irrigate at the plant's roots and avoid overhead watering, if possible. Consider soakers,

hoses or drip irrigation, both to conserve moisture and to minimize diseases common in annuals. Add one inch of water per week in the absence of rain. The first 3-4 weeks while the plants are becoming established are the most crucial to success. During this time smaller amounts of water should be applied more frequently.

Some of the newer annual varieties are "self-cleaning" and quickly loose spent flowers. However, "deadheading," or removing old flowers, is still required for many flowering plants. This task prevents the production of seeds and stimulates additional flowering. Similarly, certain annuals, like petunias, can be invigorated by heavy pruning. They can be cut back to 3-4 inches tall, watered and fertilized for a new flush of growth mid-summer.

Annual flowers, like most plants, are most successful when the thoughts and work takes place at the start of the process. Then it is time to sit back and enjoy your beautiful landscape!

For more information on growing annuals in Georgia, visit: extension.uga.edu/publications and search for 'flowering annuals'.

If you have other gardening or landscape questions, call Bibb County Extension at 478-310-5350 or email us at bibb.extension@uga.edu.

Treadwell remembers father that never came home: grief, lasting impact, reflecting on a legacy

Ed Grisamore
Melody Columnist

Marc Treadwell has always been able to put a time stamp on that early summer evening in 1967.

Every Sunday, his mother would take him, his brother and sister to their uncle's house for supper in the south Georgia community of Blackshear.

He was 12 years old, and had just finished the sixth grade. School was out for the summer.

Memorial Day had been observed five days earlier. Father's Day was in another two weeks, and this one held the promise of being extra special.

His father, Millard Leon Treadwell Jr., would soon be returning home after a one-year tour of duty in Vietnam.

It was the beginning of what the history books would later call the "Summer of Love."

But Treadwell has never been able to look at it that way. June 3 was the most heart-breaking day of his life.

That evening, he looked through the screen door and noticed two non-commissioned military officers standing outside.

"The police showed them the way to the house," Treadwell said. "My grandmother saw the two men in uniform and said, 'Well, lookee here.' But I knew right away what the news was, and they told us."

His father had been killed in a helicopter crash with five other men on a non-combat mission near Bien Hoa. He was 34 years old.

There were eight men on board. They were flying low across the rice paddies toward a village. On the other side of a tree line, the helicopter hit a power line, caught fire and crashed to the ground.

Treadwell has photographs to remind him of his father's smile. He often has to reach into his mental time capsule to recall the sound of his dad's voice and mannerisms.

When you're a child, the grief of losing a

loved one is a feeling his sister, Cindy, once described as being a "person in the middle of a phone conversation who has discovered that the line has been disconnected."

Treadwell has strong memories of his father's funeral at the city cemetery in Blackshear, a town that has gained a measure of notoriety in recent years as the hometown of former Georgia quarterback Stetson Bennett.

"When I go back to visit his gravesite, I think about the 21-gun salute and 'Taps' being played," Treadwell said. "And the folding of the flag and presenting it to my mother."

Leon Treadwell did not live to see his oldest son become a father – and now grandfather – who will celebrate his 70th birthday in August.

He never got to tell him how proud he was that Treadwell is the United States District Court Judge for the Middle District of Georgia. He was nominated by President Obama and confirmed by the U.S. Senate by an 89-0 vote on June 21, 2010.

Leon Treadwell's hometown was 42 miles up the road from Blackshear in the once-famous speed trap town of Ludowici. He went to Georgia Tech to study to become a civil engineer, and he participated in the ROTC program. He met his wife, Betty, who was in nursing school at Georgia Baptist College of Nursing. They married after he graduated from Tech and went into the Army.

Marc Treadwell said he loved his boyhood adventures as an "Army brat." It afforded his family the opportunity to travel and live in different states and countries.

They were stationed in Germany in early 1966 when Leon Treadwell was sent to Vietnam. It was his second deployment. His first assignment was to Saudi Arabia when Marc Treadwell was in the first grade.

"Both times we went back to Blackshear while he was gone," Marc Treadwell said. "It was my mother's hometown."

Growing up, his mom and his aunt would tell him all the ways he reminded

Music, from A8:

Littlefield reading things like Beowulf and I was impressed by the story and the words and the language. I liked that she knew all the different ways people understood it. And I guess another thing is I just listen to people and their accents and get a lot from that.

Alexander said what Rehab makes from its merchandise sales on Saturday will be donated to the Macon Rescue Mission. This will be Rehab's only Macon appearance as it tours this year.

Also performing Saturday are Mickey Avalon, former Saving Abel frontman Scotty Austin and Defiant. The evening will be hosted by actor-singer Peter Dante, who appeared in several Adam Sandler films.

And then there's Ashes, comprised of Lewis Ashe, lead vocals and guitar, Chris Hankey, guitar, Erik Wostenholme, bass, Mason Wiley, vocals and drums, and Andrew Adams sitting in on harmonica.

Ashes' members hail from across Georgia but met while attending school in Macon and Milledgeville and formed the band just under a year ago.

"I guess it started with an acoustic trio I was with called Lewis and the Locals," Ashe said. "I was in Macon at Mercer University where I got degrees in business and took a few music and classical guitar classes. They were a huge help. I needed to put a regular band together for a gig and knew these guys who were in a band in Milledgeville. We got together for the job, things gelled, and we ended up together. Now, we're a rock and roll band writing our own songs, doing some covers and getting out there playing as much as we can."

Ashes has played a variety of clubs, school functions and other gigs, but Ashe said Saturday will be their first show at the Capitol Theatre or any concert-style venue.

He said appearing came about in a hometown kind of way, with the mother of a bandmate having gone to high school with Alexander – that sort of thing.

"I think Rehab's tour manager fits into it somehow too, with them knowing each other and knowing we had the band," he said. "They invited us to play and, of course, we're happy for the opportunity. We hope to have some of our own music recorded and out soon."

Visit rehabtheband.com for more information about Rehab, Alexander, the Rehab Presents: WRBN Podcast and tickets for Saturday. Ashes can be found at ashentertainment.com. The Capitol Theatre is at capitoltheatremacon.com.

Contact writer Michael W. Pannell at mwpannell@gmail.com. Find him on Instagram at [@michael_w_pannell](https://www.instagram.com/michael_w_pannell).

them of his father.

It was his father's work ethic and attention to detail that had the most meaningful impact on his life.

"They always told me I must have taken after him because I was determined that whatever I was doing to get it done," he said. "If you can do something, do it right ... or don't do it at all."

Marc Treadwell communicated with his father in Vietnam by writing letters.

"He was a combat engineer," Marc said. "He had some close calls, but he never talked about those. I've only learned about them from others."

After his death in service to his country, Leon Treadwell was honored at a medal ceremony at Fort Bragg, North Carolina – one of the largest military bases in the world. Among the commendations he received posthumously was the Legion of Merit.

The last time the family got to see him was when he came home to visit his brother-in-law, who had terminal cancer. It was in December 1966, and Leon Treadwell surprised his children with the week-long visit at Christmas.

As it turned out, Treadwell's uncle outlived his father. It was a particularly difficult time for his mother, who lost her husband, father and brother within a year.

Memorial Day and the anniversary of his father's death always fall close together.

"It's a time of reflection for me more than anything else," Treadwell said. "I feel like I'm strongly patriotic, and my insight was essentially as a child. I have some understanding what servicemen and women and their families go through."

He said he has been to the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C., at least a dozen times. His father's name is located on Panel 21E, Line 53.

"It's the most incredibly moving thing to go and put my hand on that wall," he said. "What a phenomenal impact it has had on the country, not just the family members."

From Our Kitchens: Barbecuing is a team effort, time-honored tradition



Photo courtesy Jimmy Thwaite

Macon's Jimmy Thwaite is right at home with his Big Green Egg. Thwaite likens his early memories of smelling barbecue to his first taste of beer. He once roasted a whole pig with his college roommates.

Jimmy Thwaite Special to The Melody

My earliest recollection of barbecue is smelling the hickory smoke from a pit of roasting pork on a farm outside of Atlanta while on a dove shoot with my dad in the late 1950s or early '60s.

That smell is a bit like the first taste of beer I had while riding across the crystal-clear grass flats of Homosassa, Florida, in a wooden skiff with my dad when I was in the third grade.

Something about that first smell of smoke and that first taste of beer seems to be indelibly imprinted in my memory. I think I have been searching for that smell and that taste ever since.

Growing up in Atlanta, barbecue to me meant an outside, sliced pork sandwich with a side of Brunswick stew from the Old Hickory House. A slightly sweet, oniony sauce and stew you could eat with a fork.

My dad was from Macon, so we made frequent trips to Macon to visit with his mother and sister. This was before I-75 was built. These trips often included getting lunch at the Pig and Whistle in Macon or a stop at Fresh Air Barbecue in Jackson on our way home.

While in college in Laurinburg, North Carolina, in the mid-1970s, I lived in an old farm house out in the country where we "lived off the land." My roommates and I decided we wanted to roast a whole pig and have a horseshoe tournament. We had great aspirations to do the pig pickin' from start to finish; find the pig, slaughter it, scald and scrape it and roast it whole in our own pit.

In the process of choosing the pig at the hog farm an older gentleman came up to us and asked, "Y'all gonna cook a pig?" He had a french fry boat full of shredded pork in his hand.

He said "Ole [So and So] makes the best around here" and he offered me a pinch. There was no visible sauce, only red pepper flakes mixed in with the pork. That taste was a revelation to me. Like the smell of hickory smoke and that first taste of beer. Wow! That was really good.

The old man offered to help us, which we gladly accepted. After scalding and scraping the pig, building the cook pit and the fire pit he taught us how to keep the coals just right by listening to the frequency of the sizzles as the fat slowly rendered from the pig and dripped on the hot coals.

The only sauce was a basting sauce of vinegar, salt, red pepper flakes and a touch of sugar. That simple sauce, along with the hickory smoke, highlighted the star of the show, the pig.

Through the years wandering the woods of the Southeast looking at trees, I have had the opportunity to eat at countless barbecue joints — from small shacks serving lunch to local farmers and timbermen to large family style restaurants serving hundreds of people.

Sauces of vinegar and pepper in eastern North Carolina, with a little touch of ketchup added in the western part of the state, mustard based sauces in South Carolina and parts of Georgia, slightly sweet and spicy sauces in Georgia and Alabama. Sides of Brunswick Stew and barbecue hash on rice.

Somewhere around Monk's Corner, South Carolina, I encountered my first barbecue hash, a greyish stew served over rice. It was awesome. I asked the owner what was in it and he said, "Awe, it's just hog's head stew."

I bought my first Big Green Egg from Ed

Fisher in 1985. Ed advertised them in the sports section of The Atlanta Journal Constitution. At that time, they were big clay pots and they were painted a flat green color that looked like it would glow under a black light. I have had several since then. They are now ceramic and much higher quality. They are a great way to smoke pork butts, ribs and chicken.

My good friend, Roland Neel, is the owner of Mrs. Griffin's Barbecue Sauce in Macon, the oldest barbecue sauce in the United States. Mrs. Griffin's was one of the sponsors of Bubba Grills from Haddock, Georgia, in the 2025 Memphis in May International Festival and World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest.

This past weekend, there were 150 teams from 22 states and four foreign countries competing in Memphis. Lonnie Smith, the owner of Bubba Grills, asked Roland to bring three of his friends to Memphis to be part of the cooking crew. Roland asked me if I wanted to join him, Josh Neel and Art Barry, and I gladly accepted.

Bubba Grills has won many awards at various barbecue competitions. Last year, they placed first in the Kingsford Tournament of Champions at Memphis in May and second in the whole hog competition.

Lonnie and his team were determined to win the whole hog competition this year. Their preparation, techniques and attention to the tiniest of details were eye opening for me. This was more than just roasting a pig in a pit, this was an international competition.

Unfortunately, Bubba Grills didn't make the finals. The competition was fierce. Second place in the whole hog competition went to the team from Dexter Meats, in Dexter, Georgia, ironically the supplier of Lonnie's hogs. Although not winning was a heartbreak for the Bubba Grills team, the whole experience was gratifying.

Working together as a team, eating together and sharing stories was like being with family. Lonnie will be back next year even more determined to win.

Whether in the woods, in a field, or in your backyard, barbecuing is a timeless way to get family and friends together for fun and fellowship.

Barbecue sauce

One of my favorites for pulled pork or ribs.

Ingredients

- 2 Cups white vinegar (or 1 cup white + 1 cup apple cider vinegar)
- 3 Thin slices lemon
- 1 Tablespoon fresh ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 Teaspoons cayenne pepper
- 1 Teaspoon sweet paprika
- 1 Teaspoon ancho chili powder
- 1 Teaspoon red chili flakes
- 1/4 Teaspoon white pepper
- 1/4 Teaspoon white sugar

Directions

Mix all ingredients in a porcelain or stainless steel sauce pan. Bring to a simmer then turn off the heat and let it cool. Remove lemon slices.

Use this as a finish sauce by adding to a smoked Boston butt while you are pulling and shredding it.

Add a tablespoon or two of ketchup, if you like.

No other sauce needed.

Special Content furnished to the Macon Melody.

THE BEST FOODS FOR A LONGER, HEALTHIER LIFE

Sponsored by: **Carlyle Place**



As you get older, it's more important than ever to think about how you can improve your long-term health. While balancing your career, family, and personal wellness, it can be hard to find ways to keep your energy up, prevent disease, and stay active. Luckily, your diet plays a vital role in how well — and how long — you live.

By focusing on healthy, nutrient-dense foods, it's easy to get the vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants you need to help combat aging, reduce inflammation, and improve your overall health. According to Rahaf Al Bochi, R.D.N., spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, adding nutrient-dense foods to your diet can even help lower your risk of chronic disease.

Here are some of the top foods you can incorporate into your diet that will help you live a longer, healthier life.

Leafy Greens

Leafy greens like spinach and kale provide you with vitamins A, C, and K, calcium, and protein, among other essential nutrients like fiber and antioxidants. Adding greens to your diet can help reduce your risk of cognitive decline, chronic disease, and heart disease.

How to Eat More Greens

- Eat them raw in salads with your favorite toppings and dressings.
- Add spinach or kale to your smoothies for a quick and easy boost of nutrients.

• Add them to other dishes like soup or stir-fry.

This makes them a great option for improved heart health and lower cholesterol. Some studies show they may even help reduce inflammation and risk of heart attacks and strokes.

How to Eat More Nuts and Seeds

- Snack on mixed nuts instead of processed snacks like chips.
- Add chia or flaxseed to smoothies, yogurt, or oatmeal.
- Use almond butter on sandwiches or as a dip for fruit slices.

Legumes

Beans, lentils, and chickpeas are a staple of many cultures. Not only are they packed with protein, antioxidants, and other essential nutrients, but they're also very affordable. Legumes are excellent for heart health and can help lower your cholesterol and blood pressure.

How to Eat More Legumes

- Enjoy a lentil soup or a hearty chili with beans.
- Add chickpeas to your salads or make them into a delicious hummus.
- Use chickpeas or beans in place of meat when enjoying dishes like tacos.
- Replace other proteins in your meals with fish.

Fatty Fish

Salmon, sardines, trout, and other fatty fish are excellent sources of omega-3 fatty acids, which are extremely important for brain health, heart health, and anti-inflammation and can even help prevent the risk of autoimmune diseases.

Research also shows they can reduce your risk of Alzheimer's and vision impairment as you get older.

How to Eat More Fish

- Bake salmon with lemon slices and herbs.
- Add canned sardines or tuna to your salads.
- Replace other proteins in your meals with fish.

Nuts and Seeds

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Capitol Theatre brings national, local acts to Macon for Ultimate Music Wave Festival

The Capitol Theatre welcomes "The Ultimate Music Wave Festival" on Saturday at 6 p.m. featuring Rehab, a group originating out of Middle Georgia and featuring longtime, genre-bending musical artist Danny "Boone" Alexander, plus three other national acts.

But opening the show is a local band called Ashes, one of Macon's newer groups.

The Macon appearance is part of Rehab's tour celebrating the 25th anniversary of their most well-known song, "Sittin' at a Bar." At least that was its original name; a later release was called "Bartender Song (Sittin' at a Bar)."

"Yeah, it definitely had a big impact on us and is our biggest hit," Alexander told me in a phone conversation from his home in Warner Robins. "We originally released it on our 'Southern Discomfort' album in 2000 on Epic Records as 'Sittin' at a Bar.' It got pretty popular, then later got really popular."

The first release of "Sittin' at a Bar" didn't do a whole lot chart-wise, but it did start gaining momentum as an underground, viral hit. Its popularity caught the attention of record executives and the song got a redo in 2008 with country music legend Hank Williams Jr. joining in to sing along on bits. It didn't get in the Top 10 of Billboard's Hot 100 chart but did hit near its midsection at 64 and at 60 on Billboard's Country Songs chart.

It made it all the way to 11 on the Alternative Airplay list.

Two videos were made for the song: an early version without Williams and a later one with him. Most interestingly, though, is that one featured the rough, bad-guy-looking actor Danny Trejo as a bar-

tender.

Some of Rehab/Alexander's other popular songs include "Last Tattoo," "King of Tweakoos," "Welcome Home" and "It Don't Matter." Their 2008 CD, "Graffiti the World," is probably their most popular album. All in all, Alexander has recorded nine studio albums.

But what kind of music does Alexander make?

That's a tough question to answer, all the tougher when you listen to a good sampling of his music through the years. With all the talk of bars and bartenders and Hank Williams Jr. and growing up in Georgia, it would be easy to assume his biggest influence and output would be country.

But it ain't so.

It's a rollicking blend of hip-hop and rap plus good ole' country boy tunes, rock, pop, punk and even humor reminiscent of the stylings of a Ray Stevens or Weird Al Yankovic.

"We always had music playing in the house when I was growing up in Warner Robins," Alexander said. "Johnny Paycheck was the first album I ever got but I listened to all kinds of music. All kinds."

Alexander said he listened to a lot of rock and Southern rock but even enjoyed hearing the very middle-of-the-road but sexually suggestive 1970s hit, "Afternoon Delight," with its line, "Skyrockets in flight..." while at the Crazy 8 Race Track on Dunbar Road during a U.S. Bicentennial celebration.

But then came the Beastie Boys, Run DMC and NWA which birthed and cemented his love for hip-hop.

"It was hip-hop that really got its hooks in me," he said. "I guess my first rap performance was in the gym at a pep rally at Northside

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Tattnall hits the road for a semifinal at Brookstone

Michael A. Lough
For The Melody

Jordan Brooks can't quite pinpoint the last time Tattnall played Brookstone.

But he knows enough about the Cougars.

"They're obviously coached by a good group of guys over there that knows the game," said the Trojans'

head coach of the staff that includes legendary Hall of Fame Columbus-area coach Bobby Howard as an assistant. "They'll definitely be well-coached. I've got a lot of respect for them, their coaching staff. They've got a lot of experience at this part of the year."

No kidding. The Trojans will head to Columbus on Friday in a GIAA Class 4A semifinal against

the defending state champs, who took out FPD last year 7-3 and 9-5 in the championship series at Luther Williams Field. The series begins at 2 p.m.

"They've got some good guys that obviously return from a state championship team," Brooks said. "Their coaches are a lot like ours. It's old-school fundamentals, just in my opinion the right way to still

play baseball."

Maxwell Jones, Will Turner and Charles Briscoe are among the returnees for the Cougars. Tattnall is 23-6, Brookstone 24-6.

The Trojans avenged the semifinal sweep of two years ago by Strong Rock when they returned the favor last week.

The state championship series begins next Thursday at Synovus

Park in Columbus, with the Class 4A game ending the night. Action begins at 10 a.m. each day with Class A.

The Cougars needed three games to advance. They beat Bulloch 8-3, then lost 7-0, forcing a Monday finale, a 10-0 win.

They have a few GHSA wins
See TATTNALL, Page B2

FPD baseball set for key semifinals

Micah Johnston
Sports Editor

First Presbyterian Day School doesn't boast a lineup of older guys with three or four years experience, but the Vikings play like they have that kind of roster.

Only one of the three seniors gets major playing time, though all three have an impact.

"They've accepted their role, and that has spoken volumes to all the underclassmen about what's going on here," FPD head coach Greg Moore said. "They have been great clubhouse guys."

Connor Crosby, Wilson Corrigan and Peyton Howard are the three seniors, doing their part on a team loaded with juniors and a roster-wide hunger to make up for last year's loss in the championship series.

It's not a distracting hunger, thanks to steady leadership across the board.

"Some of them have been there and done it, so they don't have to say a lot. And

the guys trust them," Moore said. "So we've got a really good positive mix right now in terms of how our team's being led by a whole bunch of different players."

That and talent have FPD at 29-3 entering Friday's GIAA Class 4A semifinal series against visiting Athens Christian (24-4). The series begins at 4 p.m. Friday at FPD.

The Vikings lost at this point two years ago, in two straight to Bethlehem Christian. They're looking to return to the state championship series and possibly avenge the 7-3 and 9-5 losses to Brookstone in the final series a year ago.

The state championship series begins next Thursday at Synovus Park in Columbus, with the Class 4A game ending the night. Action begins at 10 a.m. each day with Class A.

There's not a lot of familiarity between the Eagles and Vikings, but they're undefeated against common opponents George Walton and Stratford.

FPD has beaten George

See FPD, Page B3



Jason Vorhees / The Melody

Outfielder Ely Brown rounds the bases during a game between the Bears and Georgia Tech earlier this year. Mercer performed well against the Yellowjackets and other opponents down the stretch and will look to carry their momentum from the final stretch into the Southern Conference tournament.

Mercer baseball steps up to the plate for SoCon playoffs

Micah Johnston
Sports Editor
micah@maconmelody.com

Winning one game, in any sport, is difficult. Sweeping an opponent — whether in the format of a playoff series or just a regular season matchup — takes another level of play.

Mercer head baseball coach Craig Gibson knew how tall a task it was going into the Bears' three-game set with rival Samford to wrap up the regular season, but he still hoped his team could pull off the unlikely feat and potentially force a three-way tie atop the Southern Conference.

Alas, Mercer took two out of the three games at home — a very impressive end to the season against a talented Samford squad, but not the all-out dominance the Bears needed to try and shoot for a regular season conference title share.

"Sweeping anyone is hard, and they have a really great team. I think we played really well that series, though, and that shows what kind of team we are," Gibson said. "Game 3, you just

got to tip your hat to their guy, a freshman pitcher who really just came in and got the job done. That kept us from the sweep, but it was just a really good series."

Mercer ended up tied for third in the conference instead, finishing with a record of 12-9 against SoCon opponents and a 33-23 overall mark. Now they have the No. 4 seed in the Southern Conference tournament, which began Wednesday.

The Bears first played Thursday at 3 p.m. against the winner of Wednesday's game between No. 8 VMI and No. 5 Western Carolina, after The Melody went to print.

"I'll be honest, I feel really good about it. I like our group," Gibson said of the tournament. "There weren't a lot of teams that were playing for something on the last day of the regular season. We could've had that one seed, and when you're in that situation where the last day counts, you know you've got something going."

On paper, the final stretch was not ideal; the Bears went 3-6 in their last nine games starting with a series

against Wofford back on May 2. But the wins and losses alone do not represent the brand of baseball Mercer played in those nine games, as the Bears kept it close with powerhouse ACC schools and conference foes alike.

"We played really well against Georgia Tech, only lost by one run. Then two close games against Virginia Tech, then we win the series against Samford. We're playing well," Gibson said. "Everything changes in the conference tournament, but we like how we're looking."

While Mercer will need to play an extra game since they did not get a top-two seed, Gibson does not see it as a serious problem.

"I think we have plenty of depth on our staff to cover that extra game... we're going to start Jeb Johnson in Game 1," he said. "He's pitched well for us down the stretch and the last time he faced these teams... and he pitched pretty well against that team down in Tallahassee that's ranked No. 5 in the

See MERCER, Page B3



Jason Vorhees / The Melody

Stratford catcher Jett Johnston (17) tags out FPD's Brady McHugh (7) at the plate during game two of their playoff series Friday night.

Macon GIAA teams advance



Jason Vorhees / The Melody

FPD's Bella Fritz (8) shoots the ball toward goal during the Lady Vikings' 9-0 win over George Walton Friday night.

For coverage of FPD's win over George Walton visit maconmelody.com. To read about Stratford's win over Bulloch Academy, see B2.

FPD and Stratford girls win, Mercer softball season ends

Micah Johnston
Sports Editor

The FPD Vikings girls soccer team had a dominant outing in the quarterfinals of the GIAA Class 4A playoffs last week, crushing No. 5 George Walton 9-0 in stunning fashion at home to advance to the semifinals.

Bowen Matthews scored six goals in the first half along with an assist, and did not play in the second half en route to the

blowout victory.

Despite dominating for most of the season, the No. 4 Vikings will be on the road in the next round. FPD has the tall task of traveling to Columbus to face No. 1 St. Anne-Pacelli, which looked impressive all year and even defeated the ACE girls team at home. That match was

played Thursday night, after The Melody went to print.

Thursday night, after The Melody went to print.

The Stratford boys did not score as many but still played impressive defense in their 2-0 quarterfinal win against Bulloch. Drew Sutherland and James Besterfeld scored the two goals, one in each half, to give Stratford all the scoring it would need.

The Eagles hosted No. 6 Brookstone, which upset No. 3 King's Academy.

seed, in the semifinals Friday night at Spencer Hays Field.

Mercer softball tournament run ends
The Mercer softball team's impressive post-season journey came to an end over the weekend, as the Bears fell just one win short of escaping the Gainesville regional of the NCAA softball tournament.

Mercer, which had already com-

See NOTEPAD, Page B2

Notepad, B1:

pleted an improbable run through the Southern Conference Tournament to claim the conference championship for the first time ever, defeated Georgia Tech and Florida Atlantic in impressive fashion to reach the final game of the region's round-robin format.

The Bears lost their opening game against Florida — the No. 4 team in the country in the NCAA poll headed into the playoffs and the No. 3 national seed in the bracket — 8-0 to start things, but a 7-3 win against Georgia Tech got them back on track.

Mercer had four runs in the opening frame against the Yellowjackets, who the Bears had already defeated once in the regular season, and never looked back. Hannah Pitts got the victory in the circle while Hannah Rivers knocked in two runs.

Mercer followed that win with another victory, this time a 7-0 throttling of Florida Atlantic, later that day. Gabby Ellis pitched a shutout against the Owls and a three-run double from Parris Wiggs fueled the Bears' offense.

While Mercer lost 8-0 in the final game against Florida, the tournament appearance and two wins were the first in the program's history.

ACE hires former Cavaliers skipper as baseball coach

The Academy for Classical Education announced it would hire Bubba Pool as its new baseball coach last week.

Pool comes to ACE from Mount de Sales, where he spent several years as head coach and won 154 games with the Cavaliers. Pool is a Macon native and also did field maintenance for Mount de Sales.

The hire by ACE fills the final gap left by Josh McLendon, the Gryphons' former athletic director, softball coach and baseball coach. McLendon, who led ACE to a softball state championship and playoff success in both sports, will be the head softball coach at Dublin — in the same region as ACE, necessitating frequent reunions with his former school — beginning with the 2025-26 school year.

ACE made head basketball coach Thomas Darrah its new athletic director earlier this month. Darrah is also the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach for the Gryphons



Photo courtesy Mercer Athletics

Mercer pitcher Grace Taylor celebrates emphatically after an out. Taylor was dominant in the Southern Conference tournament, winning tournament MVP honors to help the Bears reach the NCAA tournament for the first time ever.

football team.

Andrew Claxton was named head coach of the softball team. He was already a coach for the Gryphons for the past two seasons and has a daughter in elementary school at ACE.

Mercer basketball signs players, hosts camp

The Bears basketball coaching staff has been busy this month, signing several new players from across the

country ahead of the summer.

One of the more notable signings came May 2 when Mercer got Kyle Cuffe, a 6-foot-2 guard from Harlem, New York, who previously played for Syracuse. Cuffe began his career at Kansas before transferring to Syracuse, where he spent two seasons. He averaged 5.1 points per game in his redshirt junior season with the Orange last year.

The Bears also added some length

in the form of 6-foot-8 forward Connor Serven, a Virginia Tech transfer. Serven has played in parts of the past five seasons after beginning his career with Illinois before transferring to Eastern Michigan after three seasons, then to the Hokies after one year with EMU.

Mercer also signed two players this week, another big in Armani Mighty and another guard, Baraka Okojie.

Mighty is a 6-foot-10 center from Central Michigan. Originally from Toronto, he did not play last year for the Chippewas after transferring there from Boston College, where he began his career back in the 2022-23 season.

Okojie, another native of Canada, comes to the Bears from Memphis after beginning his career with George Mason in 2023. He averaged 11.5 minutes per game for the Tigers.

Tattnall, B1:

under their belt: 14-2 and 13-0 over Marion County, 14-1 against Shaw and 7-0 over Columbus.

Brookstone is 7-1 since a two-game losing streak against Calvary Christian, which was eliminated in the first round by Strong Rock, which Tattnall sent home last week.

Catcher Gray Jones leads the Cougars with a .391 average, five points ahead of Brennan Neal. Mercer Hudson has the team lead with four homers.

Neal and Hudson have teamed for 51 stolen bases.

"They've got a lot of other guys that contribute and do a lot for them," Brooks said.

Chanwoo Kim is the staff ace, with a 1.40 ERA to go with an 11-3 record. Luke Lowery and Neal are a combined 10-2 with ERAs of 1.78 and 1.03, Luke Vael with two saves.

"Their pitches do a lot of the right things," Brooks said. "They throw it well."

Tattnall counters with seven players hitting above .300, led by Wyatt Still at .458. He'll also get the ball first this weekend, carrying an 8-0 record and 1.80 ERA to Columbus. Tucker Brown is 5-1 with a 1.83 ERA, and Tristan Turner has four of the Trojans' seven saves.

Marquez Wilson is second with a .379 average, with a percentage point separating Griffey Gorman and Turner at .345 and .344.

The series may be a good one for purists to take in, neither team boasting necessarily a star-power player, but loaded with potential game-winners.

"I think the teams at the end of the year do it the old-school way," Brooks said. "They're fundamentally sound and they throw strikes. Can you throw the ball over the plate? When it's time to bunt, you bunt. When it's time to do stuff, the small-ball stuff, you do it."

"I think we're a gritty team. We've done a great job at finding a way and getting it done, however we needed to get it done."



Donn Kester / Special to The Melody

Tattnall's Anson Talcott makes contact. The Tattnall Trojans will head to Columbus on Friday to play against Brookstone, the GIAA Class 4A defending state champs.

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With solid defense and lightning-bolt goal, Stratford downs Bulloch in quarterfinals

Micah Johnston
Sports Editor

The Stratford Eagles shook off the rust with relative ease in the playoffs Friday night, as they used stellar back line play and a rocket of a goal in the second half to get a 2-0 win over the Bulloch Academy Gators in the GIAA 4A quarterfinals at Spencer Hays Field in Macon.

After earning the No. 2 seed in the bracket to get a bye week, the Eagles had not taken the field since their regular season finale April 29.

While the offense did not soar to its usual heights, Stratford came mere inches away from two additional goals — one in the first half and another in the second — that both rattled off the crossbar and were just barely cleared by bulloch.

Thanks to its lights-out defensive play, the near-makes did not figure into the final outcome.

"That's just the luck of the game. Sometimes you're off by an inch, a half-inch, and the game's 4-0," head coach Iain Jones said after the game. "End of the day, defensively we had a lot of composure. Two and a half weeks off can do a number on you, and it's been stressed to the team all week: mentality's gonna be the key."

"If you're not mentally ready, a team like this can knock you off."

Stratford improved to 15-3 on the season, while the Gators dropped to 7-6-1 in the season-ending loss. Bulloch defeated No. 7 King's Academy in a 1-0 showdown in the opening round.

The Gators clashed with Stratford in their first game of the season, losing 6-1 in what started as a 2-1 game at halftime but turned into an offensive romp for the Eagles. Stratford's defensive play and performance in goal have been key to their success, as the Eagles allowed only 15 goals all year, according to MaxPreps.

That proved true again, as defenders George Dunn and Adi Patel set the tone by dismantling any semblance of attack that Bulloch pieced together.

"It's so tough to pick just one or two, but George and Adi are our heart and soul on the back line," Jones said when asked to pick



Jessica Gratigny / For The Melody

Stratford's Drew Pavlo (8) celebrates his goal with teammates during a home game against Bulloch Academy, Friday, May 16, 2025, in Macon, Georgia. The Eagles defeated the Gators 2-0.

a standout performer from his team's quarterfinal win. "Those two guys, if they're not on, the rest of the team starts falling a little bit. They did a really exceptional job of shutting (Bulloch) down."

That said, the offense had its fair share of impressive plays. The best one of the match came when senior midfielder Drew Sutherland ripped a fantastic strike from far outside the box, forgoing any and all pleasantries to deposit the ball right into the top left corner of the net for Stratford's second goal.

It made it 2-0 about 48 minutes to go and, after a slightly stiff first half, seemed to loosen the Eagles up a bit.

"He's had a couple of those this year where it's been hitting the post or the keeper has made a great

save. I think he was overdue for one," Jones said. "I'm sure since he's a senior, in one of his last games on this field, it's a memorable one that he's going to remember for a long time."

The earlier Stratford goal was also a pretty one. It came off the lavender-colored cleat of freshman James Biesterfeld, who was able to take his time setting up the solid shot after a ricochet gave him possession not far from the net about 20 minutes into the contest.

Combined with the two near-misses, one of which made senior Stebin Horne pound the sod with his fist in frustration afterwards, it was a good night for the Stratford offense following a long off stretch. The Eagles also had to overcome some physical defense

from the Gators, who did a good job putting pressure on the ball, but Stratford's speed proved superior as the game wore on.

The Eagles mostly contained Bulloch, though the Gators broke through once with about 15 minutes to play after junior Mixon DeLoach showed nice pace and dribbled past a few defenders. His feed to center the ball was a good one, but Ebube Mbakwe could not quite squeeze it past Stratford keeper Jude Robertson.

The Eagles will play in the semifinals against No. 6 Calvary Christian, who upset No. 3 Fulton Science Academy with a 3-0 win in the second round Friday. The tentative date for the semifinal match is May 24, though the GIAA's bracket schedule often varies based on

school availability.

Regardless of the time and date, the place is set, as Stratford has secured home field advantage for the entire remainder of the tournament. Once the school's graduation is done Saturday morning, all eyes will return to the pitch.

"We'll get these boys graduated tomorrow, then we'll get right back to work on Monday," Jones said. "Home field helps, for sure, but at this time of year it's all about who's prepared and who's best mentally. The team that's most mentally prepped will be the team that gets the best results. We just have to take it one game at a time and see what happens."



ing our best baseball... if we do play (ETSU), we know how hard it is to win the regular season championship and the tournament in one year. We've done it before, and that's really tough."

Aside from the good team performance against tough competition of late, Mercer has had plenty of individual contributors all season.

Shortstop Bradley Frye and outfielder Ty Dalley have led the offense, raking all season en route to All-Conference First Team honors along with Cosper on the mound. Second baseman Titan Kamaka earned All-Defensive Team honors, while Collin Ewaldsen got a spot on the All-Freshman team.

"One guy who has been huge for us all season — I think he gets overlooked and he wasn't even recognized by the conference, is Brant Baughcum," Gibson said of another key contributor for the Bears. "We thought he was a no-brainer, he's been so crucial for us."

Baughcum started all 56 games for Mercer and hit .330 on the year with seven home runs, 44 RBIs and a .937 OPS but was not a member of the All-Conference team in the SoCon.

"Now, the guys are not going to let that completely dominate things, but it can be a motivator. We tell them, (the coaching staff) nominate the players, we don't pick who it is. We don't get to vote," Gibson said. "We also say, hey, you got a week here to show them you should've picked me."

Other players coming on strong at the end of the season could be difference makers as well. Gibson said Kamaka and veteran Bears first baseman Parker Lester made significant offensive strides as the regular season wrapped up.

The double-elimination tournament began Wednesday. Friday's tournament slate begins at 9 a.m. with the championship set for noon Sunday.

SoCon, B1:

country. We got a lot of faith in him. He's got that DNA, that makeup to compete."

Johnson also pitched well against the Yellowjackets, only making a handful of mis-

takes across six solid innings.

Mercer will start ace Colton Cosper, who struck out a whopping 11 batters in eight innings to help the Bears win the series opener against Samford last week, in the second game.

Should Mercer win its opener, that second

game will be against No. 1 East Tennessee State at 9 a.m. Friday.

"We have experience as a No. 1 seed, as a No. 4 seed, we've been all over the bracket in this tournament. We know it's tough to get it done no matter where you are," Gibson said. "We just have to come into this bracket play-

FPD, B1:

Walton 8-3 and 17-2, while Athens Christian went 5-0 against them by scores of 4-1, 14-3, 7-6, 12-1, 13-1 and 12-1.

The Vikings have topped Stratford 6-0, 10-2, 6-5 and 7-1, while Athens Christian beat Stratford once, 9-6.

Athens Christian has won seven straight since losing two out of three to Bethlehem Christian, who the Eagles swept last week on the road in the second round.

The Eagles are 10-3 on the road, including 2-0 at GHSA Clarke Central.

Keaton Westbrook threw a complete-game four-hitter in last week's opener before JB Rodgers followed with a complete-game, three-hit shutout in the clincher.

Those were efficient performances, with Westbrook registering no strikeouts and Rodgers only three, to four walks.

The bottom of the lineup came through in the 6-0 nightcap win, with Athens Christian aided by four BCA errors. Evan Wilkins and

Dylan Brooks teamed for four of the Golden Eagles' five hits.

"The word on them is that they are very fundamentally sound," Moore said. "They don't make a bunch of mistakes, and they do a great job of getting the ball in play."

"They like to put pressure on you defensively once they get guys on base, and I think they've got two or three that can really run," Moore said of the Vikings' opponent.

In other words, a lot like FPD.

While much attention is directed at shortstop and major-league prospect Keon Johnson, the Vi-

kings ride on the shoulders of many.

Like in last week's series win over Stratford.

A pitchers duel turned into a deceiving 7-1 FPD win in the opener, Brady McHugh leading off the sixth with a solo homer, and Major Simmons blasting a clinching grand slam later in the inning.

In the nightcap, McHugh stepped in for some clutch relief work, Tinsley Lewis led the way with three hits and two RBI, and Grant Martin delivered the game-winning single in the top of the seventh.

That's the kind of script that has a shot to break FPD's championship drought dating back to 2010.

"As the season progressed, we've gotten better and better at putting the ball in play and trying to put pressure on people," Moore said. "We have been lights out all year in terms of starting pitching."

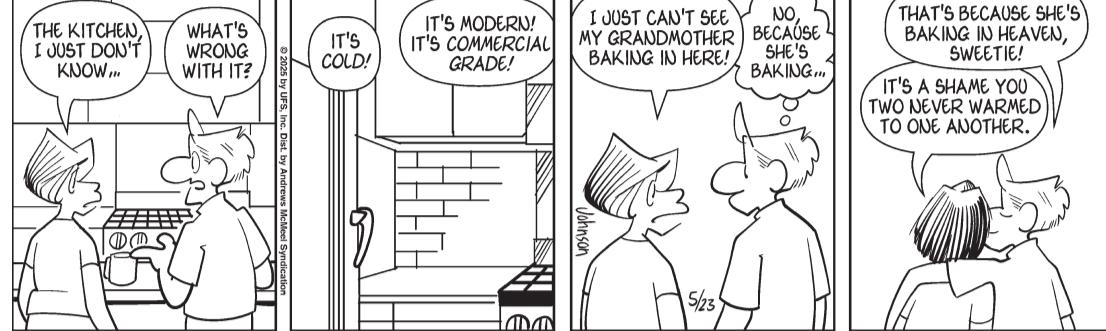
"That's a pretty good recipe, when you're doing a good job of putting the ball in play and not giving the other guys a bunch of free stuff."

"You've got a good chance in high school."

ADAM



ARLO AND JANIS



BIG NATE



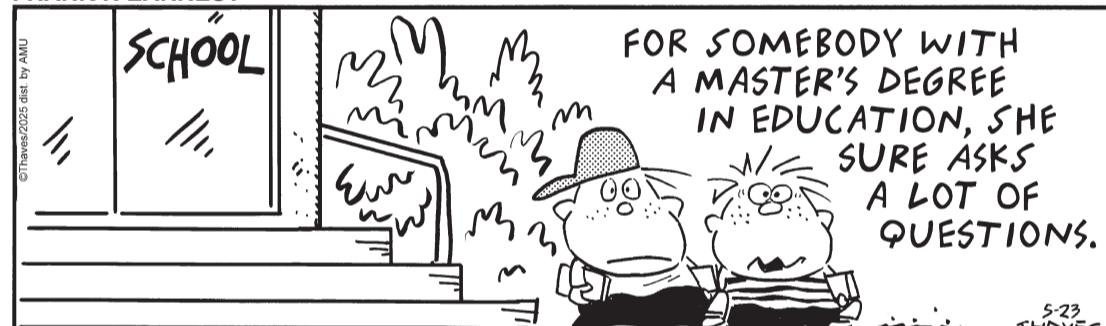
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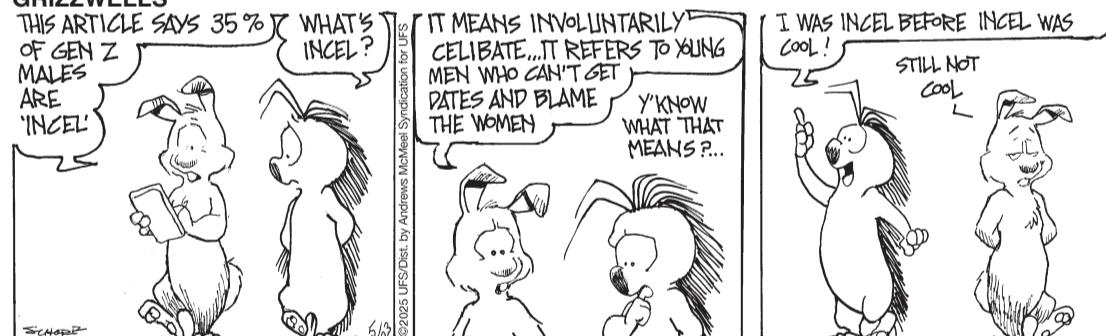
DEFLOCKED



FRANK N EARNEST



GRIZZWELLS



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MODERATELY CONFUSED



NEA Crossword Puzzle

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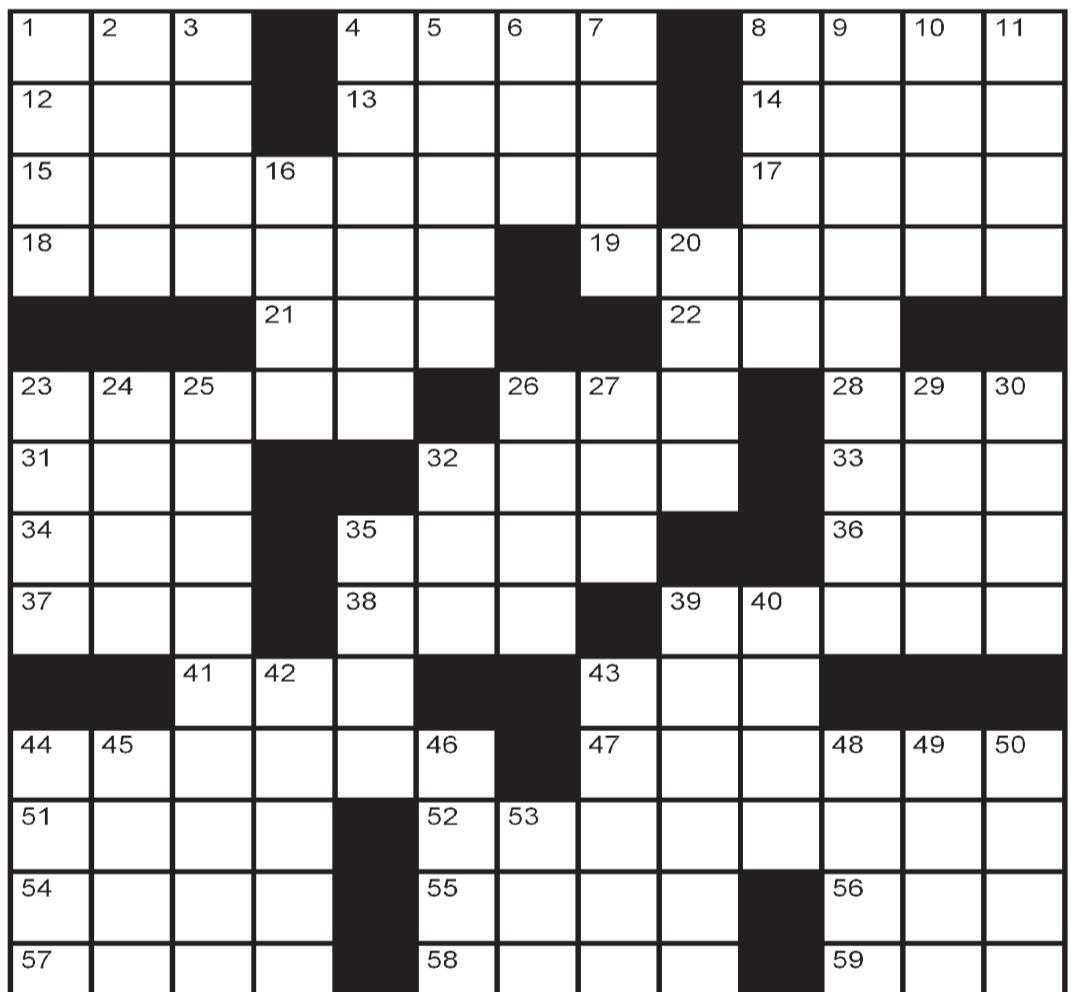
1 Pullet
4 "The — With the Dragon Tattoo"
8 Direction on a door
12 Mineral
13 Sunscreen ingredient
14 Opposed
15 Medicinal cream
17 Diner desserts
18 Looked
19 Philatelist's collection
21 "... — I saw Elba"
22 Lofty mountain
23 Walks back and forth
26 — Luis Obispo, California
33 "— Another Day"
34 Misdeed

Answer to Previous Puzzle



5 — — — France
6 Director — Howard
7 Allows
8 Of the bishop of Rome
9 Free of obstructions
10 Pace
11 Sibilant sound
16 Holiday decoration
20 Cistern
23 Unwanted creature
24 As neat as — —
25 Chinese language

26 — and pepper
27 Every
29 Juicy fruit
30 Cleanup job
32 Overly
35 "— Old House"
39 Come after
40 Auto part
42 Nips
43 Steam bath
44 Low beams
45 Chills and fever
46 Contain
48 About (2 wds.)
49 College subj.
50 Plant-to-be
53 — capita



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SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

9		1	3	7	
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4	6				
3		2	4		
1	2	3	9	4	
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Almanac

Today is the 143rd day of 2025 and the 65th day of spring.

TODAY'S HISTORY: In 1788, South Carolina became the eighth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1934, outlaws Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow were fatally shot by police officers near Sailes, Bienville Parish, Louisiana.

In 1949, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) was established.

In 1960, a tsunami killed 61 people in Hilo, Hawaii.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAYS: Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778), botanist; Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), writer/feminist; John Newcombe (1944-), tennis player; Douglas Fairbanks (1883-1939), actor/filmmaker; Margaret Wise Brown (1910-1952), author; Artie Shaw (1910-2004), bandleader; Rosemary Clooney (1928-2002), singer/actress; Joan Collins (1933-), actress/author; Drew Carey (1958-), comedian/TV personality; Melissa McBride (1965-), actress; Marvin Hagler (1954-2021), boxer; Jewel (1974-), singer-songwriter.

TODAY'S FACT: The Hawaiian tsunami on this day in 1960 was triggered by a massive 9.5-magnitude earthquake off the Chilean coast that had killed thousands the day before.

TODAY'S SPORTS: In 1895, the Louisville Colonels forfeited a home game to the Brooklyn Bridgegrooms in the third inning because they ran out of baseballs.

TODAY'S QUOTE: "Only the dreamer shall understand realities, though, in truth, his dreaming must not be out of proportion to his waking!" — Margaret Fuller, "Summer on the Lakes"

TODAY'S NUMBER: 50 million — estimated worldwide sales of Margaret Wise Brown's "Goodnight Moon" in various formats since it was first published in 1947.

TODAY'S MOON: Between last quarter moon (May 20) and new moon (May 26).

Macon Car-Free Day

Bike Walk Macon is set to celebrate "car-free day" on May 30 by encouraging people to walk, bike, take a bus or carpool instead of driving solo. Traveling car-free helps reduce traffic, cut air pollution, save money and gives you a whole new view of the city.

Bike Walk Macon is challenging 200 Maconites to go car-free on May 30. Take the pledge at bikewalkmacon.com.

Casual gatherings are set to take place throughout the day, including:

- Breakfast at Macon Bagels, 8-9 a.m. (pledgers get a free coffee)
- Lunch at Margaritas in Mercer Village (a group bus ride leaves the Terminal Station transfer station at 11:40 a.m. and returns at 1:30 p.m.)
- Evening social at Churchills on Cherry, 5-7 p.m.

Bike Walk Macon is a nonprofit organization that promotes bicycling and walking as a safe, healthy and convenient option for transportation and recreation.

MTA Free Fare day

The Macon Transit Authority is waiving bus fares on May 30 from 5:30 a.m. - 9 p.m. It also will have a community services fair in Terminal Station from 10 a.m.- 1 p.m. for riders to connect with non-profit and government resources including the county pedestrian safety review board, Crisis Line & Safe House, Bike Walk Macon, the Macon Volunteer Clinic and the library system.

Woman charged with hit-and-run injuring pedestrian downtown

Two days after a 36-year-old man was hit by a car and injured on Poplar Street, Bibb County sheriff's investigators say they have identified and arrested the al-

leged driver.

Witnesses saw the incident about 1 a.m. Sunday and called 911.

Mykia Tenequia Williams, 35, was arrested at an East Macon home at about noon Tuesday.

She is charged with hit and run resulting in serious injury and remained in jail Wednesday on a \$11,000 bond.

The sheriff's office and county have high-tech cameras and automated license plate readers at that intersection, but did not say whether the technology helped investigators.

Public input sought for Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve plan

How could the designation of the Ocmulgee Mounds as Georgia's first national park and preserve impact Macon and surrounding areas? Planners, design firms and tourism experts are helping the nonprofit Ocmulgee National Park & Preserve Initiative (ONPPI) garner public input for a regional strategic plan in partnership with the Middle Georgia Regional Commission.

Using funding from the Knight Foundation, ONPPI hired Kimley-Horn and Clarity of Place to help facilitate the planning process.

"The strategic plan will align regional goals for the park and preserve, prioritize needs and opportunities, and provide recommendations to address them. The planning process will rely heavily on local knowledge and expertise to create an impactful roadmap for fully realizing the benefits a national park can bring, ensuring that our voices help shape the future of Georgia's first national park and preserve," according to ONPPI's website.

A series of community meetings is set to start next month including:

• June 4, 5:30 p.m. in East Ma-

Community Briefs

con at the Rosa Jackson Recreation Center, 1121 Maynard St., Macon, Georgia

- June 5, 6 p.m. in Twiggs County at the Twiggs County Senior Center, 400 Bullard Road, Jeffersonville, Georgia
- June 10, 6-8 p.m. in Houston County at the Museum of Aviation, 1942 Heritage Boulevard, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia
- June 11, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, 3661 Eisenhower Parkway, Macon, Georgia

Food truck festival in Carolyn Crayton Park

The Macon-Bibb County Recreation Department is hosting food trucks for a "Picnic in the Park" festival on Saturday from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. The event is open to the public.

In addition to a wine truck from Jail Creek Farms Winery, food truck vendors include: Street Eatz, BurgerIM, Macon Water Ice, ABC Catering LLC, The Peanut Hut, Guitarras Mexican Grill, Soul 2 Soul and PeeWee Bakery Sweets. Music and a kids' zone with inflatable bounce houses will also be available for tots at the event.

Bibb County Schools' valedictorians, salutatorians

Fourteen high school seniors were invited to lunch with Superintendent Dan Sims to celebrate their academic achievement.

Here are the scholars' schools followed by valedictorian and salutatorian respectively:

- *Central High School*
Muhammad Dar &
Merlin Ramirez-Perez

- *Howard High School*
Fatima Tiozang Sappi
Helen Chang

• *Northeast High School*
Nicholas Woodford
Hayley B. Terry

• *Rutland High School*
Garrett Roberts
Brandon Durden

• *Southwest High School*
De-Andre McKinney
Ziereyal Taylor

• *Westside High School*
Kaila Lucas
Ja'Toria Faith Sherman

• *VIP Academy*
Taniyah Richardson
Madeline Davis

Graduation times are as follows:

- *Northeast High School*: May 21, at 4 p.m.
- *Central High School*: May 21, at 7 p.m.
- *VIP Academy*: May 22, at 10 a.m.
- *Rutland High School*: May 22, at 1 p.m.
- *Westside High School*: May 22, at 4 p.m.
- *Howard High School*: May 23, at 1 p.m.
- *Southwest High School*: May 23, at 4 p.m.

SUDOKU ANSWER

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

What to watch

FRIDAY

May 23, 2025

All times Eastern. Start times can vary based on cable/satellite provider. Confirm times on your on-screen guide.

Fountain of Youth

Apple TV+ ■ Original Film

Two estranged siblings (John Krasinski and Natalie Portman) partner on a global heist to find the mythological Fountain of Youth, using their knowledge of history to follow clues on an epic adventure that will change their lives — and possibly lead to immortality.

Air Force Elite: Thunderbirds

Netflix

This documentary takes viewers inside the cockpit with the U.S. Air Force's legendary flight squadron, the Thunderbirds, for the first time ever. Witness the unprecedented training, peril and personal sacrifice it takes to push the limits of aviation as a member of one of America's most revered demonstration teams.

Big Mouth

Netflix ■ Season Premiere

In the eighth and final season of this adult animated comedy, the Bridgeton teens tackle



CHRISTOPHER RAPHAEL, APPLE TV+

new challenges as high schoolers, including driving, drugs, sexual inexperience, enthusiastic consent, porn, their changing bodies and fear of the looming future. At the height of the season, when many of the characters are in crisis, Compassion (personified as a new creature voiced by Holly Hunter) emerges as a crucial way forward.

Fear Street: Prom Queen

Netflix ■ Original Film

Following the first three *Fear Street* horror movies that aired in 2021 and were set, respectively, in the years 1994, 1978 and 1666, this latest installment, which takes place in 1988, shows that the town of Shadyside still has darkness at its heart. Borrowing from '80s slasher movie tropes, this story finds all hell breaking loose as someone begins slaughtering the senior prom queen candidates. The previous *Fear Street* films were based on R.L. Stine's series of novels, but this

is the first entry with its story drawn from a specific book: 1992's *The Prom Queen*.

Missing Presumed Dead

Nat Geo, beginning at 9 p.m. ■ New Series

This series tells the fascinating and shocking stories of real disappearances, and how the victims survived their experiences and were found or rescued. Each installment focuses on one unbelievable story and is told chronologically through a combination of stylized, cinematically shot interviews with the missing person, their family and friends, and experts in abduction, surviving hostile environments and hostage negotiation, along with archival footage. Two hourlong episodes begin the series tonight. The first one focuses on journalist Michael Scott Moore, who traveled to Somalia and was captured by pirates. The next episode follows the Robertson family, whose journey sailing the world was ended by orcas.



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MOVIES YOU'LL LOVE



'50 First Dates' COLUMBIA PICTURES

Cut, Color, Murder (2022, Mystery) Julie Gonzalo, Ryan McPartlin **Hallmark Mystery, 6 p.m.**

F9: The Fast Saga (2021, Action) Vin Diesel, Michelle Rodriguez **E!, 6 p.m.**

National Treasure (2004, Adventure) Nicolas Cage, Diane Kruger **AMC, 6 p.m.**

The Dukes of Hazzard (2005, Comedy) Johnny Knoxville, Seann William Scott **IFC, 7:30 p.m.**

Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania (2023, Action) Paul Rudd, Evangeline Lilly **FX, 8 p.m.**

Doctor Strange (2016, Action) Benedict Cumberbatch, Chiwetel Ejiofor **TBS, 8 p.m.**

One Royal Holiday (2020, Romance) Laura Osnes, Aaron Tveit **Hallmark, 8 p.m.**

National Treasure: Book of Secrets (2007, Action) Nicolas Cage, Jon Voight **AMC, 9 p.m.**

Imani (2023, Suspense) Brittany S. Hall, Demetrius Shipp Jr. **VH1, 9:30 p.m.**

Dying for Fame (2024, Suspense) Dylan Raine, Amelie Anstett **LMN, 10 p.m.**

50 Firs Dates (2004, Romance-comedy) Adam Sandler, Drew Barrymore **Comedy Central, 11 p.m.**

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CATCH A CLASSIC

Memorial Day Movie Marathon Begins TCM, beginning at 8 p.m.

Starting this evening and continuing into the early morning of Tuesday, May 27, Turner Classic Movies celebrates Memorial Day with a nonstop lineup of war- and military-themed

films. This evening's schedule begins with

The Best Years of Our Lives (1946), the drama about World War II veterans readjusting to life back home that earned William Wyler a Best Director Oscar along with wins for Best Picture, Best Actor (Fredric March) and Best Supporting Actor (Harold Russell, an actual war veteran who had lost both hands during his service). Following that are 1946's **Till the End of Time (pictured)**, **Pride of the Marines** (1945), **Battle Cry** (1955) and **Marines in the Making** (1942).



DON'T MISS Law & Order The Ultimate Fan Guide

People

Friday, May 23, 2025

B6



Photos by Laura Corley / The Melody

1-2: Bob Jones and band members perform at Fresh Produce Records label release on May 15 at Capricorn Studios. The album, entitled "The Mullberries," is a posthumously completed album by the late Dustin Murdock, a talented musician and friend of the record store.



Photos by Bibb County Schools and courtesy Grant Blankenship, Piedmont Macon, Atrium Health, Newtown Macon, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce

3: Bibb County School's Superintendent Dan Sims surprised the five finalists for the 2025-26 District Teacher of the Year. From left, Cherene Lewis, Sonny Carter Elementary; Aaron Allen, Bruce Elementary; Dan Hall, Howard High School; Stuart Hardy, W. S. Hutchings College and Career Academy and Luciana Green, Central High School.

4: 2025 graduates who attended Alexander II Magnet Elementary School paraded through the school Tuesday in their graduation caps and gowns.

5: Piedmont Macon hosted a NICU Reunion on the lawn at Piedmont Macon North Hospital earlier this month. The event included light refreshments, lawn games and face painting. Families were encouraged to bring a photo from their NICU experience to share how far their child has come.

6: Atrium Health Navicent's mobile mammography coach recently served their 500th patient. The coach travels to businesses throughout Georgia to provide cancer screenings.

7: Newtown Macon's newest Downtown Hype Team members pose for a photo outside of Visit Macon. The members will serve as downtown ambassadors and can be seen at events giving helpful tips and directions.

8: Lateefah Conner cuts the ribbon on her business, Pet Party Palace, located at 536 Third St. in downtown.

To submit photos to the People page, email them to
photos@maconmelody.com



The Macon Melody 2025 Senior Stories



A SPECIAL SECTION HIGHLIGHTING SENIORS FROM:

Academy for Classical Education, Central High School, Central Fellowship Christian Academy, First Presbyterian Day School, Howard High School, Mount de Sales Academy, Northeast High School, Rutland High School, Southwest High School, Stratford Academy, Tattnall Square Academy, Westside High School, VIP Academy



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A large blue banner with white text that reads "CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2025". The banner is decorated with small graduation caps and tassels at the bottom edges.



Academy for Classical Education

Candidates for graduation

Sabah Afridi
 Waylon Thomas Allen
 Ryan Neil Arrington
 Jason Marcel Ashley Jr.
 Amelia Lynn Bacchus
 Gage Martin Bower
 Lauren Laney Bridges
 Kyle Andrew Caleb Brightman-Talcott
 Katelyn Alexis Brown
 Tanner Edward Brown
 Cameron David Bullington
 Porter Andrew Bullington
 Madalyn Ruth Bury
 Isabelle Grace Carlson
 Braeden Andrew Carmical
 John Hampton Carter
 Christopher Hyunchul Choi
 Addison Gail Clark
 Melissa Colombo
 Hannah Marie Cork
 Isaiah Thomas Dean
 Francesca NMN Divert
 Kaitlyn Elizabeth Dixon
 Matthew Eric Dodd
 Ava Faith Dotsikas
 Sara Rhett Dallas Farmer
 Caitlin Breann Farris
 Eliza Reece Fischer
 Avery Tipton Fleenor
 Hannah Rose Floyd
 Hannah Kate Forehand
 D'Nae Leila Francis
 Llyanne Chielsy Villanda Garcia
 Brooklyn Cain Giles
 Madison Jane Grant
 Anna Marissa Graves
 Hunter Kelly Guy
 Madisyn Larue Hallar
 Michael Alexander Hamlin
 Raegan Hope Hamlin
 Bailey Blake Harden
 Oren Hall Harden IV
 Amber Leah Hardy
 Zurael Keshan Hasty
 Madison Elizabeth Henry

Amely Mohammad Hazama
 Landrey Artemis Heath
 Sarah Catherine Hilliard
 Mary Wade Howard
 Sara Faye Irby
 Isabella Paige Jones
 Lucy Marie Jones
 Alexander Reid Jordan
 Robert Collins Kenley
 Zoey Laurice Khoury
 Chandler David Kirkman
 Theodore Rollin Knowles
 Matthew Hyun Woo Lee
 Mackenzie Ruth Lewis
 Lindsay Rachel Lineberger
 Lane Mitchell Livingston
 Aaron Montrail Mack-Thomas
 Sydney Collier Marbut
 Connor Andrew Martin
 Stuart Payson McCurry
 Jake Neal McLendon
 Kayla Elizabeth McLin
 Yoselin Miranda-Valencia
 Urvee Mishra
 Stratton Raines Murphy
 Victoria Leigh Murphy
 Kaleb Ryan Neesmith
 Caris Joel Owens
 Mahi Mitul Patel
 Prince Prakash Patel
 Richa M. Patel
 Samil Rupin Patel
 Tanish Vinod Patel
 Yatin Kalpeshkumar Patel
 Christopher James Patterson
 Hannah Madison Peek
 Walter Clay Pinholster
 MaKinzee Janiya Pitts
 Molly Alana Prevette
 Ava Caroline Queen
 Blaine Nicholas Rainey
 Crystal Melly Ramos
 Sawyer Jackson Raugh
 Virginia Rose Register
 Jason Moises Resendiz
 Jake Landon Riner



Alexander Reid Jordan



Emily Grace Robine

ceived First Team All-Region twice.

After graduating from ACE, Alex will attend Vanderbilt University's School of Engineering, majoring in computer science.

Valedictorian — Alexander Reid Jordan

Alex is the son of Ani and Will Jordan. He has participated in numerous extracurricular activities:

- Co-Founder of the ACE Chapter of FBLA
- Co-Founder of the ACE Ultimate Frisbee Club
- Held positions on the Math Team, National Honor Society, Beta Club, Latin Club and the ACE Associated Student Body.

Alex is also the 2025 Star Student and a National Merit Scholar. He has played travel soccer his entire life and is a 4 year letter winner and 2 year captain of the ACE Varsity Boys Soccer Team. Together, Alex and the Gryphons have won 3 region titles and he re-

ceived First Team All-Region twice.

After graduating from ACE, Alex will attend Vanderbilt University's School of Engineering, majoring in computer science.

Salutatorian — Emily Grace Robine

Emily is the daughter of Mike and Sue Robine. While attending ACE, Emily has been a member of the school's Color Guard and French Club as well as serving on the Senior Executive Committee. Emily is an ACE Principal's Scholar Award winner and has received the Georgia Certificate of Merit.

After graduation, Emily plans to attend Mercer University and study Graphic Design and Marketing.

Logan Grant Tucker
 Alexander Joshua Tunnell
 Bradyn Lee Turner
 Maria Vila Vila Rochela
 Brice Anthony Whitley
 Annalise Elizabeth Williams
 Elisha Nshey Williams
 Rede Patrick Wimer
 Ava Grace Woodell
 Karlee Shai Yates
 Karsyn Grace Yates



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16:1 STUDENT-TO-FACULTY RATIO

All undergraduate classes are held in-person during spring and fall, guaranteeing that students build meaningful connections with faculty and friends.

93%

of 2024 graduates participated in high-impact learning practices (research, internships, study abroad and service learning) while on campus.

77%

of Georgia College classes have fewer than 30 students.

Central High School

Candidates for graduation

Akayla Adkins
 Kristin Sheniah Ahanotu
 DaMonte Jabriel Ammons
 Tyneisha Taceiya Renee Andrews
 Jesus Anguiano
 Frances Ihechi Anyakudo
 Jacob Stirling Bailey
 Aaron Christopher Baldwin
 Ja'Nayla Shanice Barber
 Nevaeh Symone Barr
 Khaniya Dashae Bell
 Treda Tiarra Blackshear
 Aaron Tavan Bonner
 Jasmine Lauren Booker
 Rashawn Ken'ya Brantley
 Deja Mykhya Brezial
 Dejon Mykhel Brezial
 Angel Marie Brookshire
 Jaden McKenzie Brown
 Janyla RaShonda Bryant
 Daniaua Martezia Ann Bundridge
 Degeorgio Tyrick Bundridge Jr.
 Carlos Alexis Cadena
 Sophia Madeline Clarke
 Paige Indrea Clayton
 Auriona Shantress Clowers
 Jakia Monay Clowers
 Kaimuel Joivah Cole
 Ta'Ziya Zy'Aisa Corker
 Shalome Chayla Covington
 Nevaeh Zamia Cummings
 Ambra Samone Cystrunk
 Jordan Alexander Cystrunk
 Muhammad Babar Dar
 Keishaun Nikel Davis
 Kinsley Ann Davis
 Kyle Maxwell Dean
 Gabriel Connor Deegan
 Aniyah Chayayr Kalese Dulin Bavone
 Jamyah Kiara Dumas
 Hayleigh Renee Evans
 Ma'Kaylah Nyima Fambles
 Mariah Brenae Feagin
 Ta'Shawn Amir Fletcher
 Samantha Hope Fogarty
 Isaiah Reuben Ford-Patterson
 Wayne Foster III
 Nicholas Garrett Gamboni
 JaMarion Marques Garcia-Fennelle
 Ja'Quevyon DeWayne Gaston
 Deion Martez Gibson
 Justice Ja'meria Gibson
 Madison Mireya Gibson
 Nevaeh Annette Gibson
 Akayla Ariyanna Glover
 Aliyah China Glover
 Teri Sana'a Grant
 Johnkerria Brenee' Gray
 Kaden Bernard Grayer
 Adam Christopher Guerrero
 Camiah Shanirriah O'Lyn Harrell
 Jaquan Markel Harris
 Milah Jeschelle Helms
 Yanay Ny'eisha Henry
 Daniel Hernandez
 Kimora Elyse Hollingshed
 Saniyah Cherise Horsley
 Leah Rachel Howard
 Saniyah Janae Howard
 Ta'Larriyah Aa' Riyah Seneyah Howard
 Chaise Alexander Hubbard
 Aydrianna Mikayla Hutchinson
 Micheal Luis Jacks Jr.
 Bryson Xavier Jackson
 Jamari Jonqual Jackson
 Naomi Janae Jackson
 Zy'mir Ja'kel Jackson
 Shantavia Natasha James
 Jazlyn Alyce Johnson
 Laila Samara Johnson
 Nazir Julius-Keijuan Johnson
 Kennedi Chanelle Jones
 Mariah Denise Jones
 Sherroid Licendrick Jones Jr.
 Raven Kenisha Kellam
 Bryant Rashard King Jr.
 Charlece Ch'brandia Kitchens
 Terinni Mariah Lester
 JaDavien Martrez Lewis
 Mary-Katherine Martel Lewis
 William Granville Zephyr Lewis
 Saniya De'Asia Lockett
 Terwaski Shawarne Lockett
 Cailyn J'Nya Love
 Charvin Mendez Lowe
 Analise Corrin Lundman
 Briana Lashay Mahone
 Jikaylee Elizabeth Marshall
 Kellie J'nae Mathis
 Jardan Sa'Maiya Olivia Maxwell
 Amelia Matrice McGee
 Taylor Nakiya McIntyre
 Jeannya Yulee Merritt-Heard
 Jameelah Inaya Miles
 Destiny Shirvalerie Mims
 Jaylen Nathaniel Minter
 DeNerion Lewis Mintz
 Brianna Ja'Niyah Mitchell
 Jaylen Marquez Mosley
 Ca'Liyah Trameciya Moss
 Zaki Asim Murray
 Reanna Latrice Nelson
 Ta'Niyah Ni'Geria Nelson
 Taeionna Donsha Nichols

Valedictorian — Muhammad Dar

Muhammad Dar, son of Aisha Asghar and Muhammad Imran, has been a dedicated and high-achieving student for the past four years at Central High Fine Arts and International Baccalaureate Magnet School.

Throughout his high school career, Muhammad has earned numerous accolades, including the Georgia Certificate of Merit, two nominations for the Governor's Honors Program, four consecutive years of Principal's Honor Roll, and recognition as the school's 2024-2025 STAR Student.

He will graduate with an International Baccalaureate Diploma and has successfully completed four Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Muhammad has been actively involved in several honor societies and service organizations, including the National Honor Society, Beta Club, and Key Club. He was also nominated for the prestigious Golden Eagle Award in Mathematics.

Beyond academics, Muhammad has shown a strong commitment to community service. He volunteers regularly at the Islamic Center of North America (ICNA), where he also provides tutoring sessions for younger students. His leadership and engagement have earned him multiple awards through ICNA, including one first-place and five second-place finishes in academic competitions.

In addition to his academic and community achievements, Muhammad has pursued advanced scientific research, working on projects such as "Genes in Space" and a plant science initiative, further reflecting his passion for STEM and innovation.

Muhammad will be attending Mercer University in the fall, where he plans to pursue a medical degree with a concentration in

cardiology.

Salutatorian — Merlin Ramirez-Perez

Merlin Ramirez-Perez, daughter of Yahaira and Pedro Ramirez-Perez, is an outstanding student who has demonstrated exceptional leadership, academic achievement, and community involvement throughout her high school career.

She has been an active member of several student organizations, including Key Club, DECA (serving as President of Finance), Academic Team, Student Council (Treasurer), French Club (Secretary), National Honor Society, Beta Club (Reporter), and HOSA (Secretary).

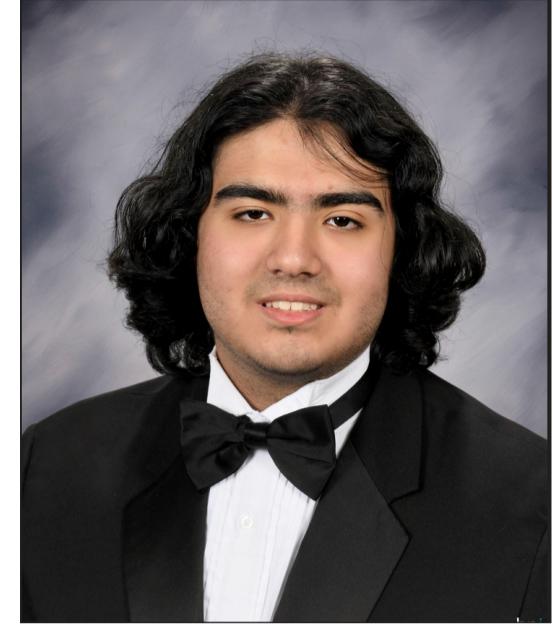
Merlin's academic and extracurricular accomplishments extend beyond the classroom. She was selected to study abroad at Central Georgia Technical College's summer program in Ireland, an opportunity that reflects her dedication to global learning and personal growth.

During the school year, she completed phlebotomy training at Atrium Health Navicent, gaining valuable hands-on experience in the medical field.

Additionally, she serves as a Student Ambassador at Hutchings College and Career Academy and has volunteered at the local Hospice Center, showing her compassion and commitment to service.

Merlin is also a Golden Eagle nominee for Science, a prestigious recognition of her academic excellence. Most notably, she made school history by becoming the first student at Central High School to complete the International Baccalaureate Career-Related Programme (IBCP).

Merlin plans to enroll at Loyola University Maryland to pursue a career in the medical field as a general physician.



Muhammad Dar



Merlin Ramirez-Perez

Raven Aniah Odom
 Tafrenya Tynise Palmer
 Amber Kelise Patterson
 Tyre Lathaddeaus Peacock
 Zaria' kianna Person
 Jadon Tyree Pleasant
 Nalayla Marie Polite
 Jeremiah Isaiah Poole
 Charlia Alexis Marie Porter
 Brianna Natasha Pryor
 Morgan Macayla Pugh
 Merlin Yorleni Ramirez-Perez
 Kamiyah Alexis Reddick
 Elijah Trevon Reynolds
 Valeria Abigail Rios-Ramirez
 Amia LeeAnn Ripley
 Ethan Jude Roberson-Gavett
 Genesis Tymia Robinson
 Tony Levett Robison Jr.
 Mya Jeaira Rodrigues
 Keasia Monique Ross
 Rodrea Deion Ross Jr.
 MarShunda Aaliyah Rouse
 Dakota Mai Rowley
 Kyoni A'Neil Sanford
 Aniyah Odera Scott
 Janelle Symara-Yvette Sealey
 Eboni Nyah Searcy
 Lindale Maurice Shannon
 Ayesha Siddiqua
 Kailyn Michelle Simms
 Mariajiah Kylencia-Tahshel Smith
 Joshua Alexander Sneed
 Jordan Nana Owusu Bekoe Malik Sosoo
 Kyra Mae Spencer
 Ajai William Spradley
 David Franklin Stephens
 Malia Latrice Tarver
 Kiya Mery Taylor
 Prince-Sacred Alameleh Thomas
 Johnathan Elijah Thompson
 Cameron Keyon Tolbert
 Tamya Nykole Upshaw
 Christopher Oronnie Ussery
 Ellis Jemal Veal IV
 Jourdayn Arnez Vinson
 Nikee Sir Charles Walker
 Kha'lyia Emerald Wallace
 Makayla Zaniya Ward
 La'Shya Daniece Washington
 Latrent Travoin Watson
 Iriondo Geremendi Williams Jr.
 Jacen Javon Williams
 ShunAnn Maurie Williams
 Benjamin James Wright

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Central Fellowship Christian Academy

Candidates for graduation

Brewer, Callie
Colquitt, Raenah
Cumsille, Maya
Daniel, Sophia
Dickerson, Hannah
Echols, Dixee
Emory, Brayden
Forbus, Abbigale
Frasure, Jonathan
Harrison-Davis, Olivia
Helms, Ainsley
Jackson, Hayleigh-Ann
Jones, Haley

King, BriAnna
Lunceford, Zachary
McConnell, Asher
Phillips, Cole
Queen, Avery
Railey, Maddox
Sapp, Heidi
Tanner, Jake
Vesey, Michayla
Walls, Cassidy
Whitehead, Nolan
Wiggins, Abbigail
Willis, Annabeth
Wingo, Adelyn



Michayla Vesey — Valedictorian
Attending Middle Georgia State University
majoring in Accounting



Avery Queen — Salutatorian
Attending Middle Georgia State University
to pursue a degree in Nursing

First Presbyterian Day School

Candidates for graduation

Janelle Alexander
Heisman Alvarez
Lawson Andress
Bella Baker
Mary Jane Bateman
Marie Bossé-Joseph
Sadie Bryant
Bryson Byrd
Kip Cawley
Packy Churchwell
Abbie Grace Cochran
Wilson Corrigan
Causey Crosby
Connor Crosby
Spencer Danner
Hannah Davis
Paige Duckworth
Rebecca Duke
Allie Emory
Charlie Fennell
Bella Fritz
Tripp Gradwell
Mary Corbitt Hartness
Dakota Heath
Caroline Hetes
Holden Hines
Merritt Holmes
Emily Claire Howard
Peyton Howard
Samuel Hunt
Ellie Jarrard
Jenni Jarrard

Maggie Jarrard
Emma Grace Johnson
Averi Jones
Lainey Jones
Cason Katzer
Chandler Katzer
Kye Kennington
Ella Lee
Bree Lefholz
Suzy Li
Brady Lincoln
Benjamin McElreath
Dalton McGreggor
Mei-Ling MiQwe
Ellie Mitchell
Heewon Moon
Jayden Moughon
Max Murnan
Sydni Norris
Grace Anne Paine
Channing Perkins
Alanna Ray
Kathryn Reffitt
Simon Shepley
Carson Smith
Emma Grace Stanfield
Ethan Tart
Wyatt Thomley
Emory Thompson
Abby Tillary
Stokes Ward
Ella Washburn
Joseph Yoon
Vova Zhuravlov



Ella Suzanne Washburn — Valedictorian



Lainey Hazel Jones — Salutatorian

Ella Suzanne Washburn has attended First Presbyterian Day School for ten years and is Valedictorian of the Class of 2025.

She is the daughter of Casey and Robyn Washburn. She is greatly involved in the arts as a committed member of the theatre department, a two-time State Literary champion, a vocal performer, and a Varsity dance team member.

She is a member of FPD's Pep Club, Student Activities Committee, National Honor Society, National Spanish Honor Society, Praise and Worship Team, and Math Team, as well as Spanish Club President. She is an active churchgoer, volunteer, and worship leader.

Ella will attend the University of Georgia in the fall and plans to major in World Language Education and Theatre. She is incredibly grateful for the education and community FPD has provided and eagerly anticipates the

future.

Lainey Hazel Jones is the First Presbyterian Day School Class of 2025 Salutatorian. She is the daughter of George and Kelley Jones.

Lainey has attended FPD since 4K and is a member of Ingleside Baptist Church. At FPD, she is a member of the National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta, Spanish Club, Art Club, and Pickleball Club. She is also a captain of the Varsity Girls Soccer Team and Pep Club Vice President. Lainey was awarded the Vicky Award this past year for most spirited senior girl, which is voted on by her peers.

She also enjoyed serving in her community through the National Charity League, Project LEAD, and Chick-fil-A Leader Academy. Lainey plans to attend Auburn University in the fall.

Howard High School

Jaden Scott Adler
JaColbie Raishon Allen
Sydney Nicole Andrews
Britney Yamileth Aranda-Bonilla
Raeleigh Julena Arimah
Amber Janae Austin
Surai Kim Baldwin
Amiracle Sha'Michael Berrian
James Carmichael Blackmon Jr.
Henry Thomas Blankenship
Karen Bonola-Perez
Donovan Michael Booker
Brian Lynn Bowen
Madison Christine Brown
Michaela Aniya Brown
Tanjah Simbria Brown
Tre'von Ty'shawn Brown
Barrae' Le'Anna Burton
Josue Emmanuel Calderon-Rodriguez
Rick Anthony Leonis Canosa
Avianna Marie Cardenas
Kaleb Edward Cardwell
Karmen Shanice Carlisle
Korey Kanteel Carson
Mi'Asia Jamial Cecil
Heien Chang
Joseph-Parker Michael Cheshire
Jaden Xavier Clark
Kameron Raymond Clark
Kamauryon JaReal Coates
Chayil Zehira Cole
Kenya Ashlynn Coleman
SaKaria Maria Coleman
Ryleigh Jaylan Collins
Jadon Xavier Combs
Tobias Elijah Courts
Tristen Kanye Coverson
Chloe' Nyima Culp
Timothy Alan Current
Ja'Niyah Tionnie Curry
Adrian Taft Daniel II

Zenabu IySandra Daramanu
Connor Thomas Darity
Madison Bernadet Justo David
Abby Emerson Davis
Koren Kani Davis
Rashad Dmitri Davis
Kourtney Janae Deshazer
Laiyla M'Carie Dugger
Autumn Mone' Duncan
Irelin Lashawna Durham
Ny'Zire Donnez Earley
Jayla Makenzye Evans
Trinity Mahlayjha Evans
Cannon Weseley Fambro
DeCoryis Rashad Fields
Amy Luan Flores
Michelle Flores-Huidobro
Christiana Joy Flowers
Jeremyah Devon Foster
Cressie Beatrice Frazier
Victor Marquis Frazier
Ansley Belle Frost
Ma'Kayla Larree Garrett
Chance Nicholas Geibel
Geronimo Keni Gentle
C'Quoia Jermya Glover
Aaliyah Marie Grant
Akia Imann Gunn
Za'kaylah Royale Hall
Christopher Stefan Handson
Abigail Jean Hardy
Cana Iman Olivia Harmon
April Marie Harris
Deztinee Elise Harris
Maximilian Augustus Harris
Tyrese Kiewan Haslem
Niama Symaria Haugabrook
John Demario Hawthorne
John Henry Hefner
Kyle Benjamin Hicks
Chase Alexander Hightower

Aaliyah JaShanti Hill
La'Staceyah A'Shayla Hill
Leonardzo Tion Hillman Jr.
Kristen Ariayuna Hines
Javon Edwin Horton
Na'Liyah Marie Houser
Anna-Claire Howard
Jamal Howard
Laila Marie Howard
Tamiya Jasmine Howard
Alexis Denise Hubbard
Marquis Jamel Hugley
J'Dyn Shirlene Hunt
William Mackiel Hunter
Antonio Manwell Jackson II
Brandon Alonzo Jackson Jr.
Jakeria Modestie Jackson
Jelani Dekaree Jackson
Kiamora Ivanna Jackson
London Chanell Jackson
Nyedia Tara-Lynn Jackson
Quinton Lamar Jackson
Alexa MaKenzie Jefferson
Prince Ronnie Johns
Elijah Calvin Johnson
Ke'Yasmine Victoria Johnson
Jaden Carter Jones
Jaliyah Ayanna Jones
Macayla Nicole Jones
Nicolas Jerry Jones
Antwane Jermaine Jordan
Chifuno Cosmas Kabisama Jr.
Suh'Cehs Roqua Kinder
Jackson James Kinross
Feza Kiza
Matthew Drue Lackey
Anh Duc Le
Timothy Lydale Love Jr.
Jaiden Amir Lucas
Kaiden Blaze Lyles
Markayla Marie Major

Da'Naiya Na'Asia Martin
Ta'Kayla Rachelle Martin
Misael Angel Martinez
Quiniya Michelle Mason
Kalen Makai Mays
Zahara Amethyst McAninch
Andre Benjamin McCane
Ahmerian Miklah Deoshay McCarthy
Xyion Ajaden McCarthy
Kali Nikole Meister
Aaron Melendrez
Ty' tienna Chri Che' Middlebrooks
Jabari Xavier Miller
Wallace Miller V
Malinda Phoenix Milton
Keyoki Akasha Monfort
Keshawn Lee Montgomery
Emani McKenzie Moore
Jaden Camille Moore
MaKenzie Olivia Morgan
Christian Amir Mosley
Joseph Dupree Mosley
Ibrahim Mohammed Ibrahim Naasan
Zion Nevaeh Newbill
Hosannia Breana O'Connor
Justin Dwarren Ogletree
La'Myia Renee' O'Neal
Donovan Elliott Pas
Devraj Kanubhai Patel
Dhruv Amitkumar Patel
Shi'Juan Jhansin Payne
Jeremiah Josiah Payne-Garrison
Ja'Leah Lanae Payton
Joseph Kaled Perez
Lorena Inez Perez Ramirez
Karolyn Lizayra Perez-Perez
Zelin Iyon Pollard
Nathan Eugene Randolph
Shaun Dewayne Redding
Taylor Jordan Reeves
Jabari Ny'el Richburg

Howard High School (cont.)

Danielle McKenzie Robinson
J'Khari Kiante Damarion Robinson
Abri Jade Rodriguez
Gabriel Emiliano Rosado
Christiana Armani Rowlett
Brianna McKenzie Arlene Sallette
Jayden Carnell Sallette
Christopher Andrew Searcy
Zalika Sir'Mya Searcy
Hailey Hariyah Shears
Amirah Sanai Simmons
Caydence Mariah Smith
Connor Gabriel Smith
Kamoria Jaliyah Smith
Roderick Jerome Solomon

Brandon Seth Sorrells
Jordyn Taylor Spivey
Zion Zylk Stephens
Andrea Tracy De Vera Stone
Maya Daneen Styles
Audrey Lorraine Sullivan
Kamaree Terrail Taylor
Jayden Derek Tharpe
Tzion Zahir Thomas
Saimone Caron Thompson
Kennedy Elizabeth Thompson
Joshua Robert Threlkeld
Jackson Lucas Tidwell
Fatima Tiozang Sappi
Xavier Emmanuel Tirado-Alicea

Jayden Alexander Tolbert
Sanya Laquierria Tookes
Emily Marie Torres
Isaiah Lucas Tundidor
RicQiena Syara Zion Turner
Nyana Marie Vargas
Logan Douglas Varner
Kweli Odoro Vocke
Braedyn Coby Wadley
Finn Thomas Wakefield
Nickalas Rashod Walker
Camille Lashay Wallace
Courtney D'Wayne Wallace Jr.
Kourtney Ray Warren
Brian Shawn Washington

Torrean U'Untres Watkins
Treyvon Jamel Watson
Deon Kenton Wellons
Stephen Anthony White
Alia Jade Williams
Donald Williams III
Karrine McKenzie Williams
LaDamion Mon'Tavous Williams
Ja'Nya Kieonna Willis
Teryiah Zy'Kellen Willis
Xavier Tavoris Wilson
Antre' Vion Malik Wright
Kamourie Jene Wright
A'Javious Marquis Wright
Finnegan Bryant Youmans

Valedictorian — Fatima Tiozang Sappi

Fatima Tiozang Sappi is the daughter of Dr. Alain-Richard SAPPI and Mrs. Victoria MANEKEU. As a Cameroonian immigrant, she speaks French and English. She has won multiple art awards, including the Art of Reading Contest. Fatima was a Clean Streets Matter finalist and was a Medical Science nominee for her school.

Additionally, she won second place in her school's poetry contest and participated in a mentorship program in which she mentored other students to be the best version of themselves.

She is part of the National Honor Society and was in DECA, in which she helped to raise over \$1,000 for her school. She volunteered with Special Olympics Sailing as a Unified Partner for Howard High School.

As a student ambassador for the dual enrollment program at Hutchings College and Career Academy, she worked to promote the welfare of proper education and encouraged many students to pursue their dreams with a college education.

Fatima has an ambition to bring love and respect for human life around the world. She has over 200 hours of community service in which she was a Sunday School assistant teacher, participated in the Best Buddies program, and is a permanent member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, a worldwide charity organization that strives to bring hope to those in need.

Fatima is a published author of two novels, Unfiltered and What Starts at the End of the



Fatima Tiozang Sappi

Road.
She plans to attend the Georgia Institute of Technology as a Business major in the fall.

Salutatorian — Heien Chang

Heien Chang is the daughter of Phi Chang and Lenh Duong.

She has participated in National Honor Society, Georgia Civic Awareness Program for Students (GCAPS), Mock Trial, Junior Varsity Tennis, Model United Nations, and Advanced Orchestra.



Heien Chang

She also has been accepted to various selective, fully funded college-prep programs hosted by universities, including the Emerging Rural Leaders (ERL) Fly-In Program at the University of Chicago, the Small Town and Rural Students (STARS) Fly-In Program at Brown University, the Access Davidson College Program at Davidson College, and the Georgia Ready Summer Institute at the University of Georgia.

Heien served as the President of Beta Club, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA),

Rho Kappa National Honor Society, as well as the Chair of the Student Council Advisory Board and a manager for Howard's Soccer teams. She is also an avid member of DECA, repeatedly qualifying for the International Career Development Conference (ICDC).

With over 300 hours of volunteer service and multilingual abilities, Heien has established her own nonprofit organization titled the "Change First Initiative," which is dedicated to empowering young people to take action in their communities through volunteerism, leadership, and advocacy, and to inspire the next generation of changemakers to lead with purpose and create a better future for all.

Throughout the years, she has worked closely with local organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Georgia, the Alzheimer's Association, the Salvation Army of Greater Macon, Lambda Kappa Mu Sorority, and BCSD elementary and middle schools.

Additionally, Heien was named Howard High School's Career, Technological, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) Student of the Year, as well as crowned the 2025 Prom Queen.

As an Advanced Placement (AP) Scholar, she was also nominated for the Governor's Honors Program in Social Studies and the Golden Eagle Award in Civic Engagement.

Accepted into some of the nation's top universities, including Rice University, New York University, Georgia Institute of Technology, and University of Southern California, Heien has decided to major in Economics and International Affairs at Georgia Tech in the fall.

Mount de Sales Academy

Luz Maria Alcantar Lemus*^o
Samuel Gaulden Alderman IV*^o
Makayla Ann Batchelor
Brett Matthew Beebe
Andrew Wayne Bentley
Kathryn Graham Blackwell*^o
Courtney Tanea Blount
Julia Hope Bonbrake
Lawrence Vincenzo Brown*^o
Julia Anne Byron**^o#
Andrew David Chambers
Charles John Clark
John Paul Clark
Mary Clare Clark^o
Ysabelle Sarte Constantino*^o
Madeline Ruth Cooke*^o#
Hannah Elise Denny*^o
Naomi Yeahbin Do^o
Jai Makayla Dudley*^o
Aubrey Riana Elmore
Eli Edward Fisher

Sana'a Keila Fordham
Nathan Owen Frankum^o
Colleen McKenna Garvin
Meinila Rosemin Granados*^o#
Joshua Kym-Tilahun Green
Mary Ella Green
Markham Hughes Gregory^o
Charles William Griffin^o
Frances Grace Hanson
Noah Carter Harris
Marisol Hernandez-Perez
James Francis Hickman
Jacqueline Lan Ho*^o
Maddie Elizabeth Johnson
Blake Carl Jones
Jasmine Taylor Jones
David Alejandro Kay
Bailey Kimber Keever
Holden Aaron-Brayden Lane
Stephen Neil Leach*^o#
Evan Lin**^o#

Abner Jackson Livingston*^o#
Ian Deshawn Lucas^o
Derrish Latron Martin Jr
Daphne Lin Fuqiang Mayville Stephens
Troy Morgan McCarty
Chyenne Jewels Mitchell^o
Taylor Ann Moore
Riley Kaitlyn Mullis
Krisalyn Thien-My Nguyen*^o
Adedayo Augustine Oderinde
Aiden Phillip Panek
Liam James Parks
Hannah Elaine Perazzola
Julissa Rodriguez
Lindy Dolores Sanchez^o
Jade Keyanna Lashay Sanders
Levi Robert Siebenmorgan
Seungho Sim
Teddy Kennis Smith
Kamila Solis-Hernandez
Thad Carter Sparks*^o

Isabella Andi St. Peter*^o#
Christavious O'Norrian Stephens
Madisyn Denae Stewart
Laila Faith Stokes
Valencia Denise Cassidy Thomas
Amire Keyelle Vamper
Ruiqiao Wang
Aiden Skye Wells
Charles Thomas Whitehead
Davien Michael Williams
Daniel McBrearty Wright^o
Isabelle Marie Yousif*^o
Maripher Zepeda-Buenrostro
Cooper Jacob Zimmerman

** Highest Honors

* Honor Graduate

o National Honor Society

Cum Laude

Valedictorian — Julia Byron

Julia Byron received the 2025 Valedictory Medal, the highest academic honor awarded to a graduating senior, as well as the Sisters of Mercy Award, which recognizes a student whose life reflects the core values of compassion, dignity, and integrity. Her accolades, however, only begin to tell the story of who Julia is.

This past fall, Julia graced us with an impactful speech shared on Mercy Day that resonated with many in our Cavalier community on the mercy values that flow through Mount de Sales Academy:

"After seven years of walking the halls of Mount de Sales, the final lesson that I will carry into college and the wider world beyond our campus is this: The act of showing mercy is not an isolated occurrence. Mercy is continuous. Mercy is infectious."

Mercy can be a gentle whisper, a soft embrace, an ember flickering in the darkness. Most of all, Mercy is unending kindness." As a scholar, artist, performer, and quiet leader, Julia is a student whose curiosity and creativity enrich every corner of her life. She earned Highest Honors and is a member of the National Beta Club, the National Honor Society, and the Cum Laude Society. Yet her success was never about the resume, but how deeply she cared to understand, express, and serve as a model Cavalier.

In the summer of 2024, Julia was selected for the prestigious Governor's Honors Program in Art, where she explored the power of visual storytelling. She also brought characters to life onstage as the "Outstanding Performer" in The One Act Play Championship. She brought that same dramatic intuition to the courtroom in Mock Trial, where she was named "Best Witness." This year, she was nominated for the United Way of Central Georgia's Golden Eagle Awards in English. As a five-year member of the color guard in the marching band, Julia's sense of rhythm, dedication, and grace have left a lasting impression at Cavalier Fields.



Julia Byron

Known for her empathy as much as her intellect, Julia reverences the dignity of others in quiet, consistent ways, through a word of encouragement and her willingness to listen. Her teachers describe her as intellectually fearless and unfailingly kind, a young woman who lifts the room with both insight and humility.

In her Valedictory Address, Julia quoted the final lines of Mary Oliver's poem The Summer Day: "Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon? Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

The question felt like an invitation rather than a farewell, one that Julia has already begun to answer through her thoughtful engagement with the world.

This fall, Julia will attend Williams College, the number one liberal arts college in the country, with full tuition, room, and board, where she plans to double major in English and Geoscience.



Evan Lin

Salutatorian — Evan Lin

Evan Lin, Salutatorian of the Class of 2025, blows us away in the Cavalier community not only with his sharp intellect and tireless dedication but also with his dry wit and quiet charm, which have made him a standout among his peers.

Over the years, Evan has grown into his voice and confidence, something he attributes directly to his time at Mount de Sales.

"This school helped me come out of my shell," he shared. "I've learned to express myself more, and I think that's made all the difference."

A scholar through and through, Evan earned Highest Honors and is a member of the National Beta Club, the National Honor Society, and the Cum Laude Society. This year, he was nominated for the United Way of Central Georgia's Golden Eagle Award in Technology. Evan also won Bibb County's STAR Student for Region VI, scoring one of the highest SAT scores in the county.

Evan is a hard-working, first-generation college student who works full-time hours at his family's restaurant, Chen's Wok. Outside the classroom, Evan pushed himself as a member of the cross-country team, showcasing the same endurance and discipline that mark his academic success. And outside of both work and the classroom, Evan found the time to explore his interests in Minecraft and building servers.

He attended an online STEM camp hosted by MIT during the summer. Evan's commitment to service has been just as meaningful as his academic pursuits, whether helping to clean up trash for the Ocmulgee Alive River Clean Up or spreading joy during the Drive-Thru Nativitity, he consistently gives back to his community with purpose and humility.

True to form, Evan's Salutatorian address didn't follow convention; it challenged it. In a bold and humorous speech, he argued, with surprising logic and charm, that procrastination can, in fact, be productive. His confident delivery and tongue-in-cheek advocacy for "strategic delays" not only entertained his classmates but reminded everyone of the power of perspective, and perhaps a little persuasion with teachers who granted mercy at times helps with this. Evan will study computer science in the fall at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

He has been awarded several scholarships, including one for winning STAR Student at the regional level, the Eatonton Elks Lodge Scholarship for his overall win in the state of Georgia, the InspirAsian Scholarship, and is a Gates Scholarship runner-up. Evan has also been awarded the Amazon Future Engineer Scholarship, which includes \$10,000 a year plus a \$30,000 summer job in 2026 that will be renewable yearly.

As Evan heads to MIT, he leaves behind a legacy of academic excellence and quiet leadership. Still, he carries the strong foundation that Mount de Sales Academy helped shape, one rooted in a commitment to excellence, service, and personal growth.

Northeast High School

Shaniyah Renea Allen
 Jaytuan Vontress Anderson
 Lyricnei Tarnai Anderson
 Jordan Messiah Appling
 Kingston M. Askins
 David-Emmanuel J. Atis-Estime
 Santana Jaques Balkcom
 William Anderson-Green
 Barnes
 Elisha Baynes-Brinson
 Damarion Tyquan Bell
 Ke'Zia Ty'Jae Bell
 Zakayla Janesia Bodaeshus Bell
 Raychard A. Berry
 Jy'Kiara Akiyah Bledsoe
 Jamal W. Bond
 Aleaha Brice
 Crystoriall Lendexica Brown
 Destinee Lanae' Brown
 DeCorian Brundage
 Andrew Phillippe Bryant Jr.
 Ke'Asia Angelique Burnette
 Jayla V. A. Cabiness
 Gabrielle Carswell
 Mariko L. Chappell Jr.
 Raequantis Amir Chatman
 Selena C. Childs
 Jordan Fayesara Clark
 Ciara Maria Clover
 Marcello S. Clover
 Paris Carlise Cobb
 Michael Eugene Coe III
 Shanyah L. Cohen
 Ah'Mari Rihanna Coleman

Jalin M. Copelin
 Jennifer Cruse
 Kennyde Kalease Curry
 Donovan N. Davenport
 Elijah Jeremiah Davis
 Jeremy J. Davis
 Shai'Da'Nay Lashay Danielle
 Dean
 Sha'Nya Dean
 Cerrick Dennis
 Zahkie Denson
 Desmond Driskell
 Diamond Michele Dunn
 Amari LaTrell Edmond
 Cobias Fennelle
 DeShanti Na'Zia Fitzpatrick
 Jonqavious S. Flowers
 Tyler Gabrieli Ford
 Travis Deontae Fuller Jr.
 Teleah Ashlynn Gail
 Jy'Asia MaKhia Gainey
 Amera Renee Gattis
 Whitney Lauren Gault
 Keontae Tayshawn Gause
 Nigerriah Glover
 Zandrea Nicole Glover
 Melvy Gabriela Gramajo-Artiaga
 Emmily K. Gray
 Zay'Veon De'Taevious Green
 Desmond Donnell Grey
 James Griffin IV
 Aday'Jah Guinn
 Ashlyn Ca'Mya Hancock

Myasia Elise Hancock
 Allana Denise Harris
 D'Miracle T. Harris
 Nyris Deshone Harris
 Trenderiz T. Harvell
 Cameron Harvey
 Candice D. Harvey
 Zy'maya Harvey
 Takennedy Haynes
 Daniel I. Hicks
 Logan Gabrielle Hill
 Mikeila Tearria Hodge
 Ta'Mya Melissa Hogges
 Ranaya N. Holliman
 Ashieya Nyriesse Holmes
 Micaiah Howard Jr.
 Rayven Janelle Howard
 Markia Charde' Howell
 Myrell Hunter
 Za'Kaila Hutchins
 Elisha Yeshua Jackson
 Jinya Denise Jackson
 Valencia Alexandria Jackson
 Ke'Wuan Jarquez Jefferson
 Jasmine Johnson
 Jaylen Johnson
 Jeremirah Q. Jones
 Elijah Jordan
 Jayden Dewayne Jordan
 Jasanna Diamond Kaigler
 Makaiya Nicole Kearney
 Ariel M. Knight
 Tristian Alexis Lester
 Xavier Tyrell Linder

Ty'von La'Eric Little
 Taneria K. Love
 Machylan A. Marshall
 Dante N. Martin
 Jeremiah Kentrez Mathis
 Kendal Matthews-Callum
 Andrew William McGirt
 Marcus Donte' McLemore Jr.
 Tamara MiKayla McMillian
 Marqia T. Miller
 Stephun Martravis Minniefield
 Dominique Amire-Marcell
 Moore
 Maryam Muhammad
 Trevon Artavious Nixon
 Jeremiah Jamarie Parker
 Tykerrio Latrelle Parks
 Azaley Zakia Person
 Austin Chase Primus-Glover
 Isaih G. Rhodes
 Ja'Darrien Keshawn Riggins
 Sa'Miyia Dezirae Roberson
 Joshua Caleb Rouse
 Ainiyah Sanae Royster
 Haneef Ramir Royster
 Demonte Cantrez Rutland
 Janoceanna O. Saunders
 Keiara LeAsha Scott
 Tavion Seabrooks
 Sifa Shukuru
 Diego L. Simmons
 Aramis Zania Singleton
 Carlos Angelo Sledge Jr.
 Amani Nicole Smith

Aniyah Smith
 Jailyn K. Smith
 Zhyne A. Y. Smith
 Elijah Jarett Stewart
 Makayla Nicole Talton
 Jaden Montae Taylor
 Justyn Isaiah Taylor
 Hayley Brielle Terry
 Jayvyn T. Thomas
 LeKyriah DaiSeauna Thomas
 Bella Sage Jahsaria Tobler
 Zantavious Towles Jr.
 Katie Truelove
 O'Mari Zy'kia Tucker
 Marquintin D. Turner Jr.
 Jermaine Ty'shaun Vickers
 Javier Von Dyke
 Destinee Jilaya Waller
 Corey Anthony Ware
 Destiny Diety Watkins
 Miracle Melonie Watkins
 Tre'Shawn E. Watkins
 Darren Webb
 Ja'Kerien M. Wedlowe
 Devin Demeze Whipple
 Jeremy Wiggins Jr.
 Aloni Lo'Real Williams
 A'Niyah Williams
 Anna L. Williams
 Zowie Markyla Williams
 Jasel Winston
 Ja'Kwon Rodre Woodford
 Nicholas Woodford
 Jamierra Young

Valedictorian — Nicholas Woodford

Nicholas Woodford, son of Natasha Woodford and Cornelius Davis, is a well-rounded and accomplished senior at Northeast High School.

Throughout his time at Northeast, Nicholas has demonstrated a strong commitment to both academic excellence and student leadership. He has been an active member of the Academic Team, Math Team, and the Student Lighthouse Team, consistently contributing to the school's culture of achievement and growth.

A proud scholar-athlete, Nicholas has made a significant impact as a member of the Northeast High School Football Program, helping the team achieve new milestones through his dedication and leadership on the field. Nicholas is also deeply committed to service and community engagement.

He has contributed to several impactful initiatives through his involvement in the Mental Health Advisory Team, Young Legends Youth Council, Best Buddies Partnership, Georgia Civic Awareness Program for Students (GCAPS), NAACP, and the Student Athletic Advisory Youth Council.

This fall, Nicholas will take the next step in his academic journey by attending More-



Nicholas Woodford



Hayley Terry

Salutatorian — Hayley Terry

Hayley B. Terry, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Terry, is a distinguished senior at Northeast High School. An avid achiever, Hayley has excelled academically while bal-

ancing a robust schedule of extracurricular and athletic commitments.

She is an active member of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) — where she has served in multiple leadership roles — Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA), the Academic Team, and the Junior Leadership Academic Bowl (JLAB).

Her dedication to service and scholarship is further demonstrated through her involvement in the Recycling Club, National Technical Honor Society (NTHS), National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS), and the Georgia Civic Awareness Program for Students (GCAPS).

Hayley is also a member of the Northeast High School Student Lighthouse Team, where she leads by example and promotes student empowerment and school improvement. In addition to her academic and leadership accomplishments, Hayley is a committed student-athlete, competing in Track & Field, Cross Country, and Flag Football.

This fall, Hayley will attend the University of Georgia, where she will pursue her dream of becoming a corporate lawyer.

Her unwavering ambition, leadership, and academic excellence set her apart as a future changemaker.

Rutland High School

Valedictorian — Garrett Roberts

Garrett Roberts is the son of Jim and Allison Roberts. He has participated in FBLA, Beta Club, MCJROTC Raider, Track and Field, and Cross Country at the county, state, and national levels.

He has completed seven Advanced Placement (AP) classes and five dual enrollment classes through Middle Georgia State University and the Georgia Institute of Technology. He was nominated for the Golden Eagle in Mathematics and Bibb County Male Scholar-Athlete.

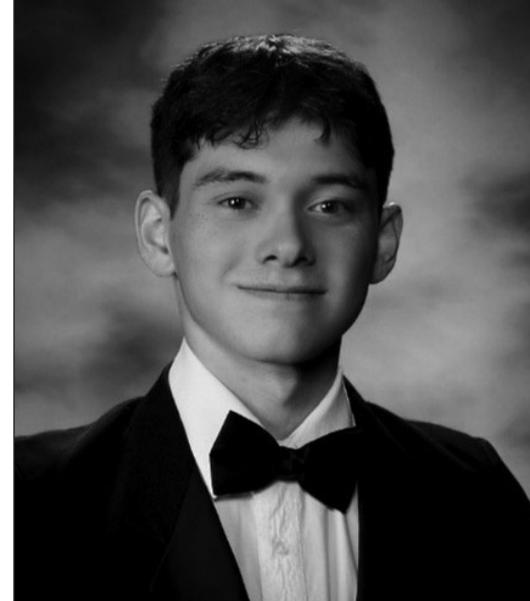
He is the 2024-25 Rutland High School STAR Student with an SAT score of 1530. Garrett has volunteered at Heard Elementary and the Thomaston Road Church of Christ food bank.

Majoring in Electrical Engineering, he will be attending the Georgia Institute of Technology on the full-ride Tech Promise Scholarship.

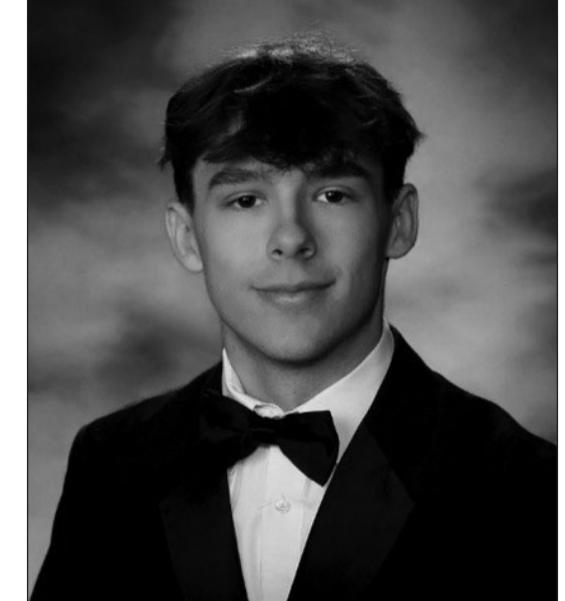
Salutatorian — Brandon Durden

Brandon Durden is the son of Jonathan Durden and Heather Watson. He has participated in FFA, Marching Band, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Band, and golf team.

Brandon has completed 10 dual enrollment classes, earning a total of 30 college credit hours. Through FFA, he has competed and won numerous state competitions and has represented Georgia at the national level. Brandon will major in Mechanical Engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology in the fall.



Garrett Roberts



Brandon Durden

Adrian Andres Andres Caniz
 Coyleen Arriion Andrews
 Melanie Alexandra Ardon
 Ta'Meicia Lashae Bailey
 Robert Steven Baker
 Patrick Banks
 Alyssa Ann Lena Bateman
 Bailey Lana Batson
 Jamiere Dasean Battie
 Zykiyah Arie Battle
 Augusta Leighann Beall
 Kyla Angela Benoit
 Ashlyn Michelle Boone
 Ta'Niyah Latrice Boynton
 Serenity Mauriee Brewer
 Khiana Elise Brewster
 Xanthia Mone' Brezial
 Elijah Ahmad Brooks
 Darius Marquise Brown
 Johnathan Bryce Brown
 Pilar Jone' Anivea Brown
 Tienna Lashay Brown
 Ainiyah Jade Burnett
 Kyra LaShawn Burnett
 Savannah Olivia Bussey
 Cherish Rh'unita Butler
 Jazmin Calderon-Dominguez
 Claurie Loanie Campos-Joseph
 Katelynn ZyKiera' Michelle Carter

Jonathan Michel Castaneda Acosta
 Ashton Micah Chatman
 Akeelah Cynquay Clark
 Derrick LaQuincy Clark Jr.
 Maurice Antonio Cobb Jr.
 Corvin Dewayne Collins
 Micah Chase Connell
 Christian Jerrez Cook
 Yamaya Nacollis Simone Council
 Javeyon Demir Crawford
 Tyler Madison Cunningham
 Chloe Leigh Curl
 Raleigh Aljhawun Curtis
 Joan Lolita-Rose D'aguirre
 Jabari Mehki Darden
 Nathan Alexander Davis
 Zanaya Idalis Davis
 Genesis Victoria De Leon
 Jamarkus Terel Dean
 Benjamin James Dothard
 Jordan Decourcy Dumas
 Justin Demarcus Dumas
 Brandon Ashley Durden
 Dylan Eugene Durden
 Kaylah Ciaron Durham
 Haylee Renee Elskoe
 Giovanni Escorcia-Vargas
 Dylan Mathew Estes
 Alaina Janae Fowler

Sarah Raquel Funez
 Brandon Tyrelle Gaines
 Leah Christina Gary
 Terrell Jermaine Gasaway
 Vonterrell Jermal Gasaway II
 Landon Bryce Gasses
 Charles Raheem Gentry-Oliver
 Shy'Kenya Omarie Gilbert
 Talya Nemya Jalon Glover
 Madison Leanne Goddard
 Khenyen Adarius Golden
 Ya'Nique Leshay Golden
 Jessica Gomez Marcelino
 Trenton Charles Gonzales
 Billy Gonzalez-Diaz
 Kimberly Gonzalez-Perez
 Spencer Sinclair Graham
 Ruthann Naomi Grant
 Allasia Lee Gray
 John Alejandro Gutierrez-Mancio
 Jose Emanuel Guzman
 Brian James Hajewski
 Dalton Gauge Hammock
 Daelynn McKenzie Harris
 Miah Shay Harris
 X'Zavion Trevez Hayes
 Nevaeh Breona Haywood
 Kamora Sade' Henry
 Darlene Hernandez

Kyla Hernandez
 Noelia Lizbeth Hernandez
 Callie Virginia Hill
 Ny'Jerrika Marie Hollingshead
 Damarri Stephon Holmes
 Danielle Elizabeth Hopper
 Haven Leyhn Howard
 Saniya Danielle Howard
 Tyler Deonte' Jah'bri Howard
 Simone Alkira Shauntia Hubbard
 Hannah Lee Huckeba
 Amber Nicole Hunter
 Wyatt James Hunter
 Myuna Deniya Hutchings
 Cordarian Terrell Jackson
 Elena Nanceline Jackson
 Kamauri DeJorge Jackson
 Joshua Cleveland Johns Jr.
 Amira Shontai Jones
 Natalie Elaine Jones
 Morgan Christopher Jordan
 Aidan Danie Joyce
 Zy'Kyria Shantol Deshay Kelly
 Makayla Nazvia Elyse Kent
 Harrison Bryce Knight
 Keadon Deandre Knight
 Felicity Patricia-Rose Lacan
 Gabriel Lamar
 A'Zharia Serenity Lane

Andy Jair Lopez-Dominguez
 Keyshawn Sincere Lowe
 Mackenzie Grace Luzier
 Olaoluwa George Makinde
 Braylan Parker Mann
 Gabriel Laureano Martinez-Guzman
 RayAnna Grace McCranie
 Seth Alan McGregor
 Isabella Marie Mercer
 Jasmyne M'Kayela Meredith
 Shundriel Tumayah Miles
 David Alexander Miller
 Kayla McKenzie Mitchell
 Nefera Ma'at Sandra Mont
 Neamiah Alexander Moore
 Yolet Morales-Diaz
 Jeremy Mark Mullis
 Travion Dishon Nelson
 Chad Thomas Lamar NeSmith
 Haylie Jane Newberry
 Catherine Elisabeth Omel
 Nyla Martinique Palmer
 DeMarius DeVonta Parks
 Jaylan Daniel Parks
 Lamya D Shawn Parsons
 Reginald Lamar Parsons Jr.
 Devin Patterson
 Seth Dekota Peterman

Rutland High School (cont.)

Ny'Shayla Nicole Piggee
Jedfred Pina Zavaleta
Kellsie Guadalupe Pina-Ruiz
Jakayla Renee' Porter
Justin Isaiah Prince
Dustin Drake Propst
Gavin Thomas Railey
Jayla Sanai Reese
Joseph Lawrence Rideau Jr.
Garrett Andrew Roberts
Lincoln Michael Lee Robinson
Amanda Edith Roblero-Millan
Ryan Rodgers

Johanna Beatriz Rodriguez
Hezakiah Dwayne Rowland
Jose Manuel Salas
Seth Benjamin Salter
Juan Elias Sanchez
Tristin A'Zariyah Sanders
Nicholous James Tyler Schaub
Jaliyah Lanae Sears
McKenzie Grace Seay
Nicholas James Shines
Alani Kelis Shockley
Kortnee' Aeron Smith
Martina S'yria Smith

Olivia Renee Sneed
Tea Alanna Solomon
Navi Akira Soth
Da'shyiara Ny'Kerria Spivey
Hunter Wayne Spradlin
Paige Symone Steele
Rico Demetrius Stephens Jr.
Aaron Kheron Stevens
Jayden Ahmad Strange
Antonio Martinez Taylor Jr.
Layla Kayti Taylor
Jamyarakal Nevaeh Tharpe
Tylan RaShod Tharpe

DeJuan Jaokeen Thomas
Noah Leland Thomas
Naima Janae Thorpe
Harley Rae Tidwell
Carlos Luis Trejos Gonzalez
Justin D'Andre Horatio Troup
Zaylen Quavion Tumblin
Jordan King Twitty
Jackson Chase Vanderveer
Emily Noemi Vega
Ny'Garriah De'Anye Waldon
Jarvis Monteze Washington Jr.
Ta'shara Diamond Watty

Karen Malaya Wells
Taniya Nicole Wheeler
Sydney Evon White
Teryl Wayne Whitehead Jr.
Mondrial Latown Whitfield
Vonnie-Rae Michelle Whitley
Aarion Tedarylen Wiggins
Jamira Katelyn Wray
Gracin Elizabeth Young
Navoris Cantrell Young Jr.
Bailey Jovett Zuniga

Southwest High School

Valedictorian — De-Andre McKinney

De-Andre McKinney is the proud son of ShaValerie Booker. De-Andre is a driven scholar and leader.

He has been actively involved in the Alpha Esquire, served as a Student Ambassador, participated in SkillsUSA for two years, and is a dedicated Upward Bound student through the Morehouse TRIO program.

He also challenges himself academically through dual enrollment classes.

Recognized as Valedictorian, a SkillsUSA Statesman, a REACH Scholar, and a recipient of the UGA Certificate of Merit, De-Andre ranks among the top 10% of seniors in Georgia.

After graduation, he plans to attend Clark Atlanta University, majoring in Finance while earning his real estate license

— laying the foundation for a future in business and investment.

Salutatorian — Ziereyal Taylor

Ziereyal Taylor is the child of Kiera Allen and Rodrekus Taylor. A dedicated student, Ziereyal was an active member of the Southwest volleyball team, DECA, FBLA, and Mercer University Upward Bound.

Ziereyal completed two pathways in Cosmetology and Emergency Medical Responders, showcasing a commitment to diverse interests.

Additionally, Ziereyal participated in Atrium Health Navicent's REACH program, which encourages adolescents to pursue careers in healthcare.

After high school, Ziereyal plans to attend Louisiana State University, majoring in Bio-molecular Chemical Engineering with a minor in Spanish.



De-Andre McKinney



Ziereyal Taylor

Keith Bernard Adams III
Ni'Kerria Belinda Allen
Michael Brian Almand Jr.
Da'Shun Cortez Anderson
Isaiah Sanjay Arzu
Brandon Kesean Ashley Jr.
Terrace Quntia Austin Jr.
Arieson Zaylee-Jade Barrow
Kheiundre Darnell Battie
Aneisha Rosa Lee Battle
Jamiya Shy-Tae Blanding
Aubrey Joshua Blash
Burnea Mayai Booker
Tyshawn Jabaree Brantley
Zerric D Erion Breeden
Ca'Mya Zynae Brown
Shanize Joeanna Brown
Darrius Antron Brundage Jr.

Carmyn Ternise Burnett
Jamarion Kendrey Burnett
Kalen Sirya Butler
Kendrick James Campbell II
Ja'Marcus La'Dale Chandler
Ci'Mayah Tiwanna Ariel Clayton
MarQuayelah Tiyae Jamiere Daniels
MySavior Brenea Darby
Darrius Keith Davidson
Anthony Sherrod Davis
Ciara Makenzi Davis
Keshad Shanterious Davis
Mel'Kailia Lamiarianna Davis
K'Shon Altorius Dean
Camren Javaras Dedrick
Cameron Jayzon Dennis
Justin De'Shawn Dennis

Toimisia'h Jazmia Elliott
DeMorio D'shun Ferguson
Kelly Taylor Fickling
Gavin Dakarai Ford
Ideisha Amelia Ford
Victoria Seneca Freeman
Oliveye' Surtiago Fuller
TriQuerria Leechelle Galloway
Ka'Mya Janesia Gary
Paris Marie Gooden
Destiny D Goolsby
Zy'keria Shynise Goolsby
Kalia Sa'mya Gosha
De'shawn Tyrell Grant
Jaymere Rayshawne Hakeem-Lucas
Jalen Dewayne Harpe
Antonio Alexander Harper Jr.
Tyrese Kiewan Haslem

SiNora Serenity Hawkins
Jeremiah Geterious Henry
Triniti Mei Lan Henson
Caleb Brennan Herbert
Ah'Monni DeShawn Varsha Hill
Cameron Jamal Hill
Christian Jameel Hill
Jamarion I'dil Hill
JaVon Shambriel Hill
Kendal Jo'Corey Hill
Kalani D'Anton Hoges
Anyiah LaShay Howard
Julius Johnathan Hubbard
Marquis Terrell Hutchings
Ja'meria La'Sha Jackson
Kyle Adonis Jefferson
Alaysia Andrea Johnson
Brandon Christopher Johnson

Demarion Bernard Johnson
Tavoris Anthony Johnson
ViKira Denise Johnson
Zikeria Nichole Johnson
Janaiya Teleya Jones
Serenity Zi'Maya Jones
Wendell Jones Jr.
Faith LaNiya King
Rishyla Shonta Kirton
Shamya JaKeia Leghorn
Kemaurie Asheyla Zykyia Lockett
Sha'Lundria LaTrese Lundy
Marcus Sheron Lyons
DeQuaveon Dayshaun Mann
Taliyah Lashanta Martin
Bryan Emilio Martinez-Garcia
De-Andre Sharod McKinney
LeAndre Algernon Miley Jr.

Tattnall Square Academy



Valedictorian — Carson Gregory Scott

Carson is the son of Ashley and Shawn Scott. As a Tattnall Traveler, Carson has attended Tattnall since Pre-Kindergarten.

He has served as Class President; he has been heavily involved in campus leadership and athletics throughout his high school career, including being on the championship clay target team and leading weekly bible study for his peers.

Carson plans to attend the University of Georgia in the fall, majoring in Biomedical Physiology.

Ava Alewine
Gracie Appling
Andrew Bacchus
Sawyer Bar-
tholomew
Ny'Kerria Battle
Ashton Bennett
Abigail Berkner
Jacob Berkner
Hayes Boyd
Marykatherine
Brake
Tucker Brown
Cameron Brown
Olivia Bryant
Carson Burnett
Silva Chandler

Cody Colter
Ethan Davis
Ayda Deuley
Ayden Dunn
Casyn Eaton
Caden Faulk
Davis Fyke
Caroline Garretson
Olivia Gilliam
Jack Hartley
Baili Hodges
Tyler Hunnicutt
Sophia Hutchinson
Courtney James
Antone Johnson
Jack Joseph
Molly Kemp

Maddox Kimball
Raymond Kimsey
Noelle Liscombe
Ashleigh Logue
Tristan Loosier
Jackson Malcom
Makayla Malone
Hannah Mask
Carolyn McGehee
Presley Moore
Landon Nichols
Charlotte Patterson
James Pauleon
Carson Scott
William Shimp
Aiden Smith
William Stuart

Anson Talcott
Annamary Talcott
Griffin Thamess
Abigail Thomas
William Thompson
Tristan Turner
Thomas Union
Kennedy Walton
Megan Walton
William Warnock
Julia Wealot
Christian Weeks
Alaina White
Cameryn Winget
Carly Winget

Salutatorian — Sophia Helen Hutchinson

Sophia is the daughter of Robin and Robert Hutchinson.

As a Tattnall Traveler, Sophia has attended Tattnall since Pre-Kindergarten. She is a Governor's Honors Program alumnus for mathematics and has been heavily involved in leadership academically and athletically throughout her high school career. Sophia plans to attend the Georgia Institute of Technology in the fall, majoring in Chemical Engineering.

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and We Are All Farm Bureau.
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Southwest High School (cont.)

Harijah Tazariyun Miller
Marquis Antwon Mintz
Nixerius Kentrell Moore
Cameron Marcus Morris
Lalaya D'Mya Mullen
Andrea Lamiya Murphy
Imani Aasyiah Murray
Amira Carletta Newell
Lluvia Velitzia Ortiz
Zahria Ariel Parks
Sa'Riah Taye' Pearson
Jeremiah Demonie Perry
Tyler Xzavion-Henry Pettiway
Christopher Joseph Pipkins
Isaiah Jarmarcus Ponder

Deja Ai'Miracle Preston
Shantierra Shandria Prophete
Jevon Dwayne Pryor
Zandarious Ty'Quan Pryor
La'Mya Shanise Reid
Quadeja Nayema Richardson
Gabrielle Shaniya Roberts
Amiah Jenelle Robinson
Carmen JaNyla Robinson
Steven Antwan Robinson Jr.
Shantel J'Nai Ross
Jacquelina Isabella Silva
McKenzie Jenna' Sinclair
Christine Lasandra Smith
Jamaricus Javontay Smith

Tremerra Chenard Smith
Janiya Jakia Spencer
Denisha Je'Doria Marie Stephens
Shy'Myrae Ty'erra Sade' Stewart
Aniya Danielle Strong
Ja'Naddia Ania Sutton
Jayla Brianna Swain
Gabrielle Ty'Neisha Taylor
Ke'Andre Jemaine Taylor
Ke'Moria Jamecia Taylor
Khadaja Leona Taylor
TaQuecie Davine Taylor
Ziereyal Jha'Nya Armiracle Taylor
Christian Micah Terry
Katari Malik Thomas

Timothy Glen Thomas Jr.
Trayvon Omerion Thomas
Willie Maurice Thomas Jr.
Tristan Rashun Thompkins
Ayana Jakira Demetrice Tinsley
Timothy Jermaine Ussery
Karah Adrianna Vinson
Nyasia Denise Walden
Samantha Leann Ward
Aiden Xavier Warren
Jamarea Keontaze Watkins
Tyemear M Watkins
Adriana Nicole Weaver
Kelise LeLasia Wilkins
E'zokie Ali Williams

Jaylynn Marice Williams
Kendi Jaceld Williams
Octavious Ja'darious Williams
TeAnthony Geron Williams
Trenity Elayah Williams
Cameron D'Kacieon Wilmore
Zaire Unique Wimberly
James Clifton Winston
Jakhori Jamal Woolfolk
Lakeyshia Yarbrough
Aidan Grey Young
Viktoria Niaysia Young
Xavier Marquette Young

Stratford Academy

Anderson Aubrey Bailey
Blake Christian Beasley
Mia Tarini Bhasin*
Michael John Brand*
Tyler Jerod Burnett
Sallie Orlean Butler*
Catharine Elizabeth Caldwell*
Lucie Anne Cheek*
Dixie Andrews Clark
Mary Leland Cozart*
Dorothy Slade Cranford
Chase Gabriel Crowder
Martha McKay Culp*
Dhruv Nirmal Das*
Katherine Elizabeth Dent*

Ashley Farren Dixon
Kaitlyn Amelia Epps*
Wesley Alexander Flournoy*
Eden Lily Griggs Frayne*
Brooks Davidson Garner*
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Avery Claire Caroline Geary*
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Kaleb Rhys Jones
Emma Rose Jordan*
Virginia Cobb Jorgensen*
Mitchell Andrew Justice Jr.*

Anna Katherine Katz*
Graci Victoria Kluge
Eden Elizabeth Kovacs*
Fiona Josephine Leary*
Adam D. Lease*
Sophia Margaret Leigh*
Hendley Tison London*
Thomas David Mann*
Caroline Zoe McAfee
Emily Mercer McElrath
Malik Javed McTyson
Taylor William Meece
Taylor Susan Monroe*
Tessa Isabel Morehead
William Spencer Nguyen

Cecelia Jane Noblitt
Aaron Vijay Patel*
Adi Vinod Patel*
Andrew James Pavlo*
Rahul Babu Pavuluri*
Salvador James Phillips*
Frankie Barnard Raines Jr.
Shamiya Garianna Raines
Alice Elizabeth Rauls*
Carson McGaughey Reeves*
Nyra Grace Robinson
Mary Frank Seagraves*
Molly Edward Seagraves*
Elias Evan Shaker*
Matthew Lloyd Simons

Andrew Johnson Sutherland*
Thomas Phillips Swift III*
Hunter Yoldaash Seyed Tehrani*
Kate Louise Terry*
Stewart Croswell Vernon Jr.
Dhruv Vijay*
Elizabeth Claire Walker*
Kaliya Amari Walker
Abigail May Watson*
Robert Eager Wilkin III*
Banks Elizabeth Williamson
Laura McCutchen Wilson*

*indicates Honor Graduate

Brooks Garner — Valedictorian

Brooks Davidson Garner is the valedictorian of Stratford Academy's Class of 2025. Stratford's Student Leadership Board President, an AP Scholar with Distinction, a National Merit Commended Student, a Golden Eagle Nominee for Athletics, and a Vince Dooley Award Top 10 Finalist, Brooks is also the recipient of Scholar Athlete Awards for Varsity Boys Track and Varsity Football and the Dr. John Paul Jones Best Male Senior Athlete Award.

In addition to these honors, Brooks has been a recipient of the Outstanding Student Award two times as well as the recipient of the Mary Eva Harper Excellence in Chemistry Award, the John William Herin Jr. Commitment Award, the Walker Bethune Memorial Scholarship, the Harvard Prize Book, and the Bobby Gene Sanders Memorial Scholarship. In the fall he will be attending the University of Georgia as a business/finance major and member of the Morehead Honors College.

Adam Lease — Salutatorian

Adam D. Lease is the salutatorian of Stratford Academy's Class of 2025.

A National Merit Commended Student, AP Scholar with Distinction, and Professional Association of Georgia Educators STAR Student, Adam also has been the recipient of the Patrick S. Gilmore Band Award, Scholar Athlete Award for Band, Outstanding Student Award, the John William Herin Jr. Commitment Award, the Henry Harding Tift IV Memorial Scholarship, and the Yale Book Award. In the fall he will begin his studies at Cornell University as a physics major.



Brooks Garner



Adam Lease

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VIP Academy

Rachel Lynn Abel
Marissa Deangela Adside
Sher'l Lay Mo'neece Andrews
Yahir Ivan Angel-Alcaraz
Nakayla Brianna Anthony
Antwoine Ramon Armstrong Jr
Ja'Tavia Michelle Ayers
Breyanna Renee' Barnhill
Ja'khan Lincoln Osbourne Beckford
Ariana Nicole Belcher
Kenyeza LaVivian Bell
Nakya Sophia Brabham
Corbin Sentrell Brewer
Jamichael Keyl Brown
Rickayla Katina Brown
Taylor Alexandra Burroughs
Zion Malik Campbell
Syhairie Johann Cartagena
Armani Tayan-NeJewlrie Clowers
Kingston Corday Colbert

Destini Denae Cornelius
Desiree Akyla Crowell
Tanisha Ann Daniels
Brandon Lee Davis
Kelsey Amhad Davis
Madeline Josephine Davis
Ty'Rel La'Jordan De'Shazier
Reginald Terell Dixon II
Curtis Dugger Jr
Cameran Malik Felix
Ashlee Jasmine Fisher
Solomon Damborg Fraga
Jada Marie Fuller
Areyannah Amaya Galvan
Carson Daniel Gandy
Cynthia Rodriguez Garcia
Ethan James Gibson
Victoria Lakeisha Gray
MaKayla DeShae Griffin
Jermaine Everett Grundy Jr

Jaden Kentrez Harden
Ty'Tianna Denaye Harris
Calvin Alphonso Hendley
Ja'Malra Antwawn Henry Jr
Darlen Alexandra Hernandez
Imerria Nicosha Hill
Lashell Citiva Hill
Janza Ramaiya Huston
Jezerell Corderro Ramiya Huston
Jakeria Modestie Jackson
Janiya America Jackson
Earon Maurice James Jr
Kennedi Jenae Johnson
Alliah Samar Karim
Keynara Kenish Kendrick
Tiosha Markesia Lamar
Aailiyah Makayla Lemons
Lenaeja ShaTae Maxwell
Xaria Tytianna C'mone Maxwell
Kenyan Vashawn May

Hannah Spencer Mayfield
Naomi Janita McCray
Tyler Chad McDonald
Jamauri Deyon McGee
DixieRose Elaine Messer
Wy'Keviah Latalsha Mims
Teyana Ty'asia Moore
Malik Lilbible Dvant Muhammad
Aiden Howard Odom
Quavion Myleke Parks
Ayla Jade Peavy
Jaden Araceli Perez
Brianna Madison Phillips
Na'Shayvia Jalena Poole
Keavis Omaran Raines
Keviis Omare Raines
SaMiya Christian Reid
Tanyiah Ti'Amber Richardson
Lily Madison Romeo
Tyler De'Shae Rouse

Trinity Divine Rowlett
Stacy Ty'kia Royal
Kamya Vontee Rutledge
Makya Lee Simmons
Quanasha Shamiria Stephens
Nagee Marquise Stinson
Najae Azuree Stinson
Munashe Phillip Tarirah
Alonah Chanel Taylor
Kyla Nicole Taylor
La'Shuntae America La'Pearl Taylor
Nadia Terree' Thomas
Symone Denise Thomas
Marcos Damain Vargas
Teeghen Jakevia Washington
Jarrious Brice Wesley
Deontae Quashawn Williams
Shamiaya Latrece Williams
Serenity Michelle Wright

Valedictorian — Tanyiah Richardson

Tanyiah Richardson, daughter of Shakita Howard and Tyrone Richardson, is the proud Valedictorian of the VIP Academy Class of 2025. With an impressive 4.0 GPA, Tanyiah has demonstrated academic excellence and a deep commitment to her education throughout her high school career. She is the recipient of the 2024–2025 VIP Academy STAR Student Award and has successfully completed two career pathways: one in World Language (Spanish) and another in Business, Management, and Administration (Business and Technology Pathway). In addition to her high school achievements, Tanyiah also has participated in dual enrollment at Central Georgia Technical College, further advancing her academic experience. This fall, she will attend Mercer University, where she plans to major in Nursing. Tanyiah aspires to become a Women's Health Nurse Practitioner, with a passion for advocating for and supporting

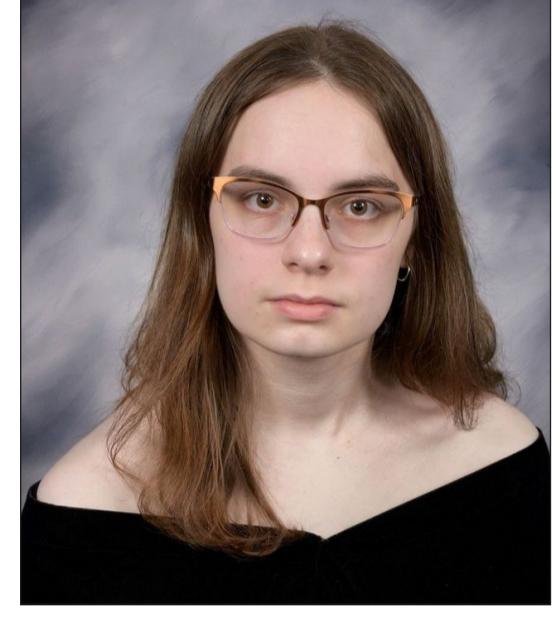
women's health in the future.

Salutatorian — Madeline Davis

Madeline Davis is the proud daughter of Chad and Anna Davis. Throughout her high school career, she has consistently demonstrated academic excellence, earning a place on the honor roll each year. As a result of her hard work and dedication, Madeline is honored to serve as the 2025 salutatorian of her graduating class. A well-rounded scholar, Madeline is a member of the National Beta Club and is known for her creativity, love of reading, and passion for music. In addition to her academic achievements, she has studied Mandarin Chinese from a young age and remains deeply committed to continuing her studies in the language. This fall, Madeline will begin the next chapter of her academic journey at Mercer University, where she has been accepted, and looks forward to pursuing her passions and future goals.



Tanyiah Richardson



Madeline Davis

Westside High School

Eunice Aguilar-Barajas
Nazish Ali
Ronda Guadalupe Angel Martinez
Anahi Avalos
Maria G Avalos-Alcaraz
Chloe Jarnesha Banks
Jayden Victoria Baxley
Glendy Floridalma Bernabe Lopez
Davion Akeem Berrian
Kameron Jamarr Braddy
Nyigia Nicole Bradshaw
Adrianna Dionne Bray
Dameisha Marie Brinson
Morgan Tamar Brooks
Youmi Jadae' Brown
Joshua Terrell Burnett
Christopher Davin Campbell Jr.
Noah Matthew Carr
Za'Darius Taeshan Center
Jocelin Guadalupe Cervantes-Angel
Akirah D Clark
Samuel Isaia Clark
Antonio Andrey Coleman Jr.
Kaygen Alayisa Coleman
Courtavious Tyree Colemond
Michael 'Drionna Ashayvion Colemond
Jeremiah Xzavier Collier
Mikeila Desiree Collins
Daniel Isaiah Simeon Conner
Brian Keith Crawford
Estefania Cruz
Deshawn Andrew Cunningham
Kynnadi Renaye Danielly
Corey Jarrod Daniels Jr.
Tayshun Ricardo Daniels
Kamri Alexis Darling
Braeden Elisha Davis
Ja'Nia Davis
Roderick Christopher Davis Jr.
Jaden Tyler Dawson
Asia Marie Dent
Deshon Drexler
Shaniyah Nicole Durham
Mieto Elocho
Ja'nia Jakeria Simone Fambro
Ronnie Eugene Ford III
Calissa Monae' Fordham
Damon Armerius Foston
Takenya Shailexius Foston
Ma'Kiya Nikole Franklin
Xavion Servantes Frye

Torri Madison Gail
Jeffry Garcia Naranjo
Morgan Cheyenne George
Xavier U'Vontay Glover
Zyntreal Rashawn Glover
Khamora Amesia Grayer
Charsolyn Kelis Green
Irene Geneva Green
Kamiyah Alexis Green
Lillian Hope Griffin
Jac'Keria Kaliyah Hall
Joshua Anthony Harden
Jordan Cortez Hardy
Zuri Cerene Harper
Jasper Treyori Duane Harris
King Massian Harris
Laurnay Cree Harris
Connor Latrell Hawkins
Isaiah Rayshaud Hawkins
Aiden Lucas-Kackah Hess
Larry Dean Hightower III
Jordan Dewayne Hill
Sydney Makayla Hill
Jordan Rashard Hobbs
Anthony Glenn Hodges Jr.
Darran Jerome Hogan Jr.
Ki'Moiray Lavon Holland
Sha'mya Lyeisha Hollingshead
Christian Caali Holt
Tristan Mekhi Walker Houston
Kristina Kennedy Howard
Jayden Karmel Hunt
Kadiphius Tiyun Iverson
Jamir Courtney Jackson
Tristan Jeremiah Jackson
ZaShawn ZaMar Emanuel Jackson
Shakayla Maqueta Jenkins
London Nicole Johnakin
Kaitlin Denesha Johnson
Kendra Nicole Johnson
Titiana Kamori Johnson
Zavius Robert Johnson
Zion Tremaine Johnson
Aaliya Sheridan Jones
Alysee Nevaeh Jones
Chase Xavier Jones
Inara Marie Jones
Kianna Arielle Jones
Taylor Simone Jones
Ya'Kerria Ken'Nay Genise Jones
Tyannia Maria Jordan

Amoni Dio're Kelly
Altanese Deshanay King-Coates
De'Maya LynAsia Kitchens
Landis Leland Lane
Angel Ivan Ledesma-Cabriales
Jadel Alejandro Leonard
Ty'Mir Armada Lewis
Briana Shauntea Monique Little
Christian Tyree Little
Jacoby Deshawn Lockett
Kaila Janae Lucas
John Cornelius Mann
Ji'Kayla Michelle Marshall
Kendrilla Dextiana Matthew
Kaniyla Denise McCrary
Jabari Travon Marquet McKinney
Gina Renee McNeill
Isaiah Jordan Miley
McKenzie Camille Mitchell
Fabian Amir Moore
Jazmine Sharde Nataila Moore
Tera'naja Mekeya Moore
Dominique Dantoni Morris Jr.
Kacilyn Makenzie Nixon
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Alyssia Shanya Orange
Akeelah KeShauna Palmer
Destinee A Paul
Makayla Cha'lei Pearson
William Andrew Pearson
Joshua Elijah Prince
Terrell Najee Burnard Prince
Tr'Kivan Jamaree Pringle
Jonathan Israel Ramos
David Ramos Rodriguez
Keith Lamont Ray II
Cameron Elijah Rembert
Naely Adriana Respaldiza
Aliyah Makayla Rhodes
Makayla Charneice Rideaux
Trinity Renae Rivera
Zarriah Marie Rivera
Alexceya Nabriya Roberts
Tone' Alynna Ross
Jarvis Nathaniel Rumph Jr.
Tannya Kumari Sah
Kenyonna Lashae Sams
Tristin A'Zariyah Sanders
Chrishon Josiah Scott
Terrell Wesley Scott
Rodreavious Antonio Sears

Ja'Toria Faith Sherman
Kaleiyah Saniya Nashae Simmons
Asia Teyana Slaughter
Carlos Lannard Slaughter Jr.
Clayton Allen Smith
D'Necia Chanbriel Smith
Heather Lanita Smith
Jakari DeWayne Smith
Maiyah Tamari Smith
Shaniya Jennetta Smith
Tanyiah Samara Smith
Kassidy Ava-Marie Solomon
Elijah Julian Spain
Destiny Lashae Spencer
Dorothy Eaden Spradlin
Makorrha E'Lunnia Stallworth
A'Marion Jerez Starling
Ja'Niya LaFaye Sweet
Ja'Beya Ya'Tese Talton
Xavier Leighton Talton
Zion O'Marion Talton
Jada Amera Tharpe
Ca'Marion Nytese Thomas
Minnie Elesha Thomas
Jaylan De'Angelo Thompson
Nathaniel Davontae Thrash IV
Keziah Shontrel Tipton
Beautiful Ny'Angel Tucker
Antrenado Deandre Turner
Zachariah Rashawn Veal
Cormen Desiree Walden
Chance Mekeil Walker
Jayden Randell Walker
Kerriyona Shalice Walker
McKayla McKenzie Waller
Simeon Ezra Watkins
Javarian Ahmaad White
Jobari Rashawn Whitley
Jordan Tarell Williams
Kyra Eshon Williams
Ambria Janae Wimbush
Ra'Kyah Frita Wims
Nashiya Zymir Womack
Tajah Ashlee Wood
Ja'Tariya Lashay Woodard
Craig Larmont Wright Jr.
Ja'dyn Nicole Wright
Ny'Asia Yolanda Wright
Henry Denilson Cesilio Zarate Ixquiactap
Hernan Robino Cesillio Zarate Ixquiactap
Jatavion Tavar Zellner

Valedictorian — Kaila Lucas

Kaila Lucas is the daughter of Tasheika Brown and Rodriques Lucas. She has participated in Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA), Beta Club, International Club, Upward Bound, Student Council, Student Lighthouse, Student Advisory Council, Volleyball, Soccer, Track & Field, and Flag Football.

She was also her school's STAR Student. Kaila has volunteered with second grade students at Veterans Elementary School along with special education students at her school. In addition, Kaila was nominated for the Golden Eagle Award in the category of Literature. Kaila will major in Speech-Language Pathology at the University of West Georgia.

Salutatorian —

Ja'Toria Faith Sherman

Ja'Toria Sherman is the daughter of Torell and Jackie Sherman and she is the oldest of three siblings. In her spare time, Ja'Toria enjoys creating custom apparel and making candles.

During her time at Westside, she has been an active member of several clubs/organi-



Kaila Lucas



Ja'Toria Faith Sherman

zations such as Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Family Career & Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), the Student Lighthouse Team, the Student Council as the Grade Level Representative, the Marching and Concert Band, Basketball, and Tennis.

She is also a member of Upward Bound Math-Science (TRIO) and represented Georgia in 2023 as the Female Student Ambassador for the National Student Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., and at the Georgia TRIO Conference in Atlanta.

She has studied abroad in Japan and served as a hostess for exchange students from Kurobe, Japan. Ja'Toria has volunteered as a member of United Way's Youth Council at Brookdale Resource Center and Backpack Ministries.

She also has contributed to her community by being a Girl Scout, recycling for Keep Macon Bibb Beautiful, Smooth Move, Open House, and with the Macon Lead with Literacy organization.

In addition, Ja'Toria was nominated for the Dr. Curtis Jones Leadership Award, and is a recipient of the Epsilon Omega Omega Exemplary Youth Promise Scholarship (AKA), Delta Sigma Theta Scholarship, and the Southern Tennis Foundation Scholarship.

She's also a four-time recipient of the Morning Music Club and Partners in Education Music Scholarship.

Upon graduation she plans to attend Kennesaw State University in the fall to major in Elementary Education with an endorsement in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and a minor in Spanish, Japanese, or Music.

She will also participate in KSU's Keeping Sights Upward Journey Honors College.



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Samuel Gaulden Alderman IV*



Makayla Ann Batchelor



Brett Matthew Beebe



Andrew Wayne Bentley



Kathryn Graham Blackwell*



Courtney Tanea Blount



Julia Hope Bonbrake



Lawrence Vincenzo Brown**



Julia Anne Byron**†



Andrew David Chambers



Charles John Clark



John Paul Clark



Mary Clare Clark*



Ysabelle Sarte Constantino*



Madeline Ruth Cooke*†



Hannah Elise Denny*



Naomi Yeahbin Do*



Jai Makayla Dudley*



Aubrey Riana Elmore



Eli Edward Fisher



Sana'a Keila Fordham



Nathan Owen Frankum*



Colleen McKenna Garvin



Meinila Rosemin Granados*†



Joshua Kym-Tilahun Green



Mary Elia Green



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Marisol Hernandez-Perez



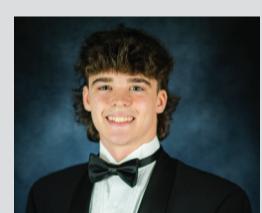
James Francis Hickman



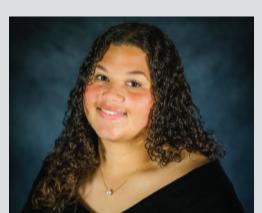
Jacqueline Lan Ho*



Maddie Elizabeth Johnson



Blake Carl Jones



Jasmine Taylor Jones



David Alejandro Kay



Bailey Kimber Keever



Holden Aaron-Brayden Lane



Stephen Neil Leach*†



Evan Lin**†



Abner Jackson Livingston*†



Ian Deshawn Lucas*



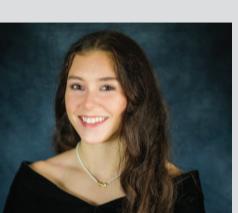
Derrish Latron Martin Jr



Daphne Lin Fuqiang Mayville Stephens



Troy Morgan McCarty



Chyenne Jewels Mitchell*



Taylor Ann Moore



Riley Kaitlyn Mullis



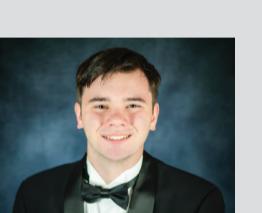
Krisalyn Thien-My Nguyen**



Adedayo Augustine Oderinde



Aiden Phillip Panek



Liam James Parks



Hannah Elaine Perazzola



Julissa Rodriguez



Lindy Dolores Sanchez*



Jade Keyanna Lashay Sanders



Levi Robert Siebenmorgan



Seungho Sim



Teddy Kennis Smith



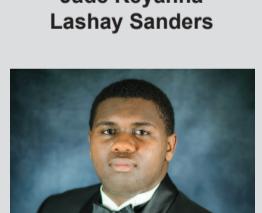
Kamila Solis-Hernandez



Thad Carter Sparks*



Isabella Andi St. Peter*†



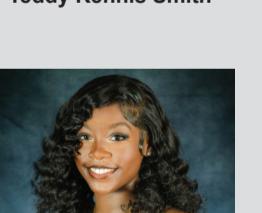
Christavious O'Norrian Stephens



Madisyn Denae Stewart



Laila Faith Stokes



Valencia Denise Cassidy Thomas



Amire Keyelle Vamper



Ruiqiao Wang



Aiden Skye Wells



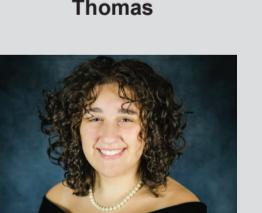
Charles Thomas Whitehead



Davien Michael Williams



Daniel McBrearty Wright*



Isabelle Marie Yousif*



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